

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NEVER FORGOTTEN.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER XI. MAJOR CARTER.

A RIM of low old-fashioned little houses, like dolls'-houses, runs round a sort of hexagonal tea-board-shaped patch of green, called Hans-place, just at the back of Sloane-street. A slumbering monotony reigns here. The hall doors are tight, and have a huddled hunchback air, and the houses themselves are squeezed close, like a crowd at a show where room is precious, and where stewards have been seen making people move up. Major Carter and his son had now three rooms in one of these little houses—the parlour story and a cold little warren at the top, where the roof began to slope inconveniently just over the deal dressing-table. The major had seen troubles of late; things had not gone smoothly with him. "Poor Mrs. Carter's long illness was a heavy 'draw' upon us," he used to say. "She required many comforts, and all the care we could give her. Our doctor said change of air—keep moving about: and she had change of air, poor soul! I am not as rich as I was, and I am not ashamed to own it."

Heavy business matters, too, were entailed on the major by the death of his wife—what he called "winding up her affairs" (in the Irrefragable Company), kept him in Hans-place. He had to watch those fellows, who were treating him in a shabby unhandsome fashion. Otherwise, town was not nearly so suited to the major's life as the little realm of a watering-place. There he had everything under his hand: he could cover them all with his hat. "We were more thrown together there," he said. "Some of the pleasantest days of my life were spent at Eastport."

But there was yet another attraction. A stout round red and wealthy lady, called Mrs. Wrigley, had a house in Cadogan-place, where, having twenty years before decently interred Joseph Wrigley, Esquire, Chairman of the United Bank, she lived in quiet and substantial splendour, and swung about London in a quaint old chariot. As the late chairman had been what is called "universally respected," so his relict was as sincerely admired. She was the object of many gallantries from young gentlemen and men of a

more "suitable" age; and she treated these worshippers with mature coquetry, which did not seem in the least out of place, and were conventionally accepted by the circle in which she moved, as quite becoming. Youths struggled who should "take her down"—i.e. to supper; and at parties younger pairs were often detained at the foot of the stairs, while she slowly passed down the straits, a sort of human reproduction of Turner's "Fighting Téméraire" towed to her last Berth" by a light military tug.

Yet with these worldly condiments she mixed a little religious seasoning. Until she came to know Major Carter, she affected the society of the Reverend Punsher Hill, a dissenting clergyman of a strong spiritual flavour, whose chapel was in the Chelsea district. There he poured out streams of holy hartshorn—the very Preston salts of divinity—and "drew" large crowds. With him was combined, in her society, a clergyman of the more established ritual, who sprinkled ess-bouquet and rose-water from his pulpit, and made everything pleasant.

For these gentlemen a sort of "main" of tea was kept flowing in Cadogan-place. The odium theologium did not, as it ought to have done, hinder their assimilating or balancing Mrs. Wrigley symmetrically on each side, as though they were "supporters" for her arms. She had contributed handsomely to Mr. Punsher Hill's new conventicle, built for him by admirers of his Preston salts, which was called "Mount Horeb;" and she had given moneys to Mr. Hoblush for what he called his "visiting women." A "delightful young man," said many; "too long expended on the rural districts, now happily given up to the vast fields of missionary labour, which lie in the uncleared country of drawing-rooms, and among the pretty soft tulle-clad natives, all more or less benighted."

These two influences reigned until she came to know Major Carter. That worldling gradually began to undermine her faith, or at least her warm devotion. She was too good natured to feel any change, or show any change; but the worldling had more force of character than the two spiritualists. They felt themselves slipping as on a parquet floor, and soon the success of Major Carter was so marked, as to attract public whispers, and public attention, and public murmurs, and public anger.

She was delighted with Major Carter's quiet air of the world, with his calm "weight" of manner, and readiness of speech. The others seemed untrained children near him. When his cold eye fell upon them, the two clergymen did not like the sensation.

One little transaction firmly established him as suggesting the association of intellectual power, and the command of men's minds. The two clergymen were sitting with her one afternoon, when the "main" of tea had been laid on. Mr. Punsher Hill's figure was round, coarse, and Jersey pear-shaped. It was like a Seal in clerical attire. His face was red and brawn-like, and his throat but awkwardly confined in heavy folds of linen. But Mr. Hoblush's spiritual dress, and the figure which that dress enclosed, was all elegance. It was shapely, uncreased, unfolded, and unwrinkled. His coat or mantle seemed to flow downwards, and with such a low full grace, that there seemed a hint—a sort of little artifice—as of an apron present. His voice was soft and tender. He could not sing, but he played "a little" on the violoncello.

Major Carter came in as they were busy on the "Mount Horeb" Chapel. The Rev. Alfred Hoblush was tolerant of all denominations. But Mrs. Wrigley was not so interested in these matters as she used to be. She talked to them of Lord Puttenham's coming music.

"I have done what I could," said the Rev. Alfred, sweetly, "but I have not sufficient interest. I would give the world to be there myself."

As for Mr. Hill, it was understood, without allusion, that *his* walks were not the Puttenham walks. No reference was made to him.

Suddenly entered the worldling Carter, who began to chatter airily and delightfully on mundane topics—bringing in a little legend about Lady Mantower and Mrs. Weynam Lake—serving them delicately to Mrs. Wrigley as though they had been morsels of warm toast spread with marrow. The clergy present looked at him ruefully. "All the world," continued the worldling, "is crowding to this Puttenham party, and his wife, of course. More the wife, perhaps, than the world;" and then he worked this text pleasurably and fluently for a half-hour, and then rose to go. He put his head in again. "By the way, Mrs. Wrigley," he said, "I had a message, which I had forgotten. Strictly in private, though." He whispered, "I have ventured on a great liberty, but that is all right—the Puttenham affair, you know. It will come to-night. But a profound secret, I stipulate that."

The surpassing delicacy with which Major Carter had transacted this little affair—his anticipation of her wishes—from that hour established his supremacy.

CHAPTER XII. LORD PUTNENHAM'S LITTLE PARTY.

THE Town knew Lord Puttenham very well. He was sometimes darkly mentioned as the "noble Amateur." He was a musical lord, had played "a little," i.e. execrably, on a hoary Cremona

violin, and gave a little musical senate laws. There was no Lady Puttenham, and so, through his fine house in Dover-street, strange and protracted agonies were heard, as of a maiden wailing, which was the musical lord busy with his "scales;" and in the musical house sheets of music lay tossed here and there, high and dry on chairs and cabinets, floating wildly on the carpet, as though there had been a wreck, and a great musical Indianman had gone to pieces in the drawing-room. The musical lord going about on duty, sat as a musical magistrate, and had cases brought before him, on which he passed judgment. New harmonious gipsies, eager to get a hearing, and who had brought either a voice, or a fiddle, or a whistle, from the Continent, were led away to him, and adjudicated on. His head lay so much on one side with this listening, that the attitude became habitual and normal; and on occasions of extraordinary attention he listened with his head erect. Yet he was a florid, round, selfish, and practically useless nobleman. With all his audiences, his whispering in corners, his taking of buttons and button-holes, his shrugs, his showering of criticism and musical terms as from a dredger, he never did any good for any new or wandering artist. And when one had, with infinite struggling, rowed into public favour, the musical lord came paddling at the stern with a little oar no bigger than a fan, and really enjoyed the credit of having contributed largely to the success.

In the large mansion in Dover-street, the musical Lord Puttenham gave entertainments, which were known mysteriously as "rich musical treats." These were a sort of dry Trappist matinées, and evening "réunions," where the board was spread with music, and music only; and the tables groaned with quaver entrées, and light crotchet hors d'œuvres, and a sparkling presto, served as champagne. Lord Puttenham always bewailed the decay of classical music, and did his best to restore it; and if a sort of "service," that lasted hours, the close to which was marked by the flutter of the turning of the twentieth page; and if faces of agony, and jaws hanging wearily, and mournful rustling on chairs, and acute pains about the spine, and welcome drowsiness (with some), and strange cerebral confusion (with others), and something like incipient idiocy (with one or two); if this was restoring classical music, Lord Puttenham did so effectually on every one of his "second Thursdays."

Strange to say, people came eagerly, nay, struggled to come. People of fashion, and people of quality, and people with daughters—like Lady Laura Fermor. Wise and wary woman! She saw that the soil was soft enough for rifle-pits. She saw that, from the hopeless and dispiriting character of the place, the warriors and chiefs would be driven in perforce upon what entertainment *she* could offer; and that in the arid desert character of the country, *her*

daughters would stand out with an artificial attraction, from the force of contrast. Noble—zealous—almost chivalrous commander! What she suffered in the way of ansterities—for cane chairs, affording rude and imperfect support, were brought in, to economise space—will never be known. If holding out her poor arm day and night, and keeping her fingers closed till the nails grew through the palms—according to the Brahmin practice—could have helped forward her mission, she would have done it cheerfully. She did not know Lord Putnenham, but she soon “reached” him; and though the girls could move their ivory keys in the same rude way that they had learned the “dumb-bell” practice and the “pole” exercise at Madame Cartier’s, and the graceful handling of the mallet—still they had qualified sufficiently, and could be rapturous in musical praise without falling into blunders.

On a certain second Thursday all the world was there. For weeks before, the Putnenham head, well to one side, had whispered, and hinted, and shrugged, of a new artist that he was bringing out: “A young Hungarian fellow, by Jove; heard him last summer, in a com-mon cabaret at Prague, absolutely a Com-mon cabaret. I never heard ‘Tone’ before. A very unassuming young fellow. And I have got him to come to England. He will coin. He will put them all out—Sainton and the whole gang. It was the merest chance I just turned in there. Otherwise, he would have been fiddling away to Boors and Beer, for the rest of his life. I think I know what Tone is; and I say distinctly, Tone has never been heard until now!”

As Lord Putnenham spoke thus at his own drawing-room, a faint echo from behind said, softly: “Tone never been heard till now!” And the registered owner of the echo was Vasi, a musical aide-de-camp on his staff. Vasi was professional, and a sort of Italian Englishman, who was the real chain that bound the musical lord to the actual professional world. He had what he called musical “circles” of his own, where there was genuine music provided, and genuine music paid for; and Lord Putnenham he found useful as a fine ground where he could pick up fashionable subscribers. A melodious duke or two, an harmonious earl, had been seen moving their heads with accurate beat, in time to the lively rhythm of an “Allegro Vivace,” the Promised Land coming into sight after months of wandering in sterile “Adagios.”

Lord Putnenham had far more ladies than men coming to have the torture applied. Men did not suffer the “Little Ease” so cheerfully. They were restless. Once, indeed, three ill-conditioned “cavalry fellows,” who had got shut hopelessly in the heart of the cane chairs, and not being trained to habits of restraint, rose at the end of a “maestoso,” and rudely and loudly and conspicuously forced their way out through the company, causing great confusion. One was heard at the door using what Lord Putnenham called “a ribald expression,” and which sounded

in the key of “utter rot!” “From that moment,” said Lord Putnenham, “I have made it a rule never to ask any of those soldier people.”

“Won’t you have an Analysis, Lady Laura?” said Lord Putnenham, handing her one. “We have a ‘rich treat’ to-night. Only one daughter, I declare! Now, now!”

“We knew,” said Lady Laura, “how precious space was to-night. We left poor Alicia Mary whose *passion* is music. We shall get no seat, my dear” (this aside to Blanche), “if you don’t move on.”

The place looked like the Tuileries Gardens, there were so many cane chairs. It was crowded. Major Carter had, somehow, managed to “get” to the party, by clambering with infinite pains and heat and difficulty up into a tree. Still he was there among the leaves and branches like the rest of the company. The fashionable paper had his name, also that of Young Brett, and of Captain and Mrs. Fermor. Miss Manuel had merely said to the noble host: “You must give me a few blank cards for those I like,” and a whole sheaf had arrived.

Mrs. Fermor had welcomed this promised treat with delight. She enjoyed music, and even the homily-like classical music. “Oh, Charles,” she said, “how kind of her, how charming, how we shall enjoy it.”

Fermor was still icy, and had plans of his own for that night. “I think you had better not go. It is really too great a tax upon a stranger. We could scarcely go upon such an invitation. If you like to go yourself with Miss Manuel—”

“O no, no. And you think so? But,” she added, a little quickly, and her cheeks beginning to glow, “I suppose the same argument will apply to us both?”

“Not at all,” said he, colouring too. “You don’t quite follow me.”

This looked like the beginning of the cold skirmishings which lead to incompatibility. Mrs. Fermor went to her room, ready to cry like a child, or like a girl, as she was. But they both went after all. Grim Mr. Carlay came stalking down from his rooms on the stairs: he somehow heard weeping, and appeared before Fermor in his study. The metal in his face seemed to have assumed a greater tightness and density. There was an air and manner about him that was irresistible. His remonstrances—for they were only remonstrances—seemed to be edicts. They went together; but Fermor went chafing, as though he had been a free man chained to a convict, whom he must take with him.

When they got there the concert had begun. They had arrived at the “Grand Posthumous Quatuor in E minor,” which was being interpreted by these four artists:

Ragwitz Béla

Krowski,

Smart (alto),

and M. Piletti (cello).

Ragwitz Béla was the young violinist whom the host had discovered in the “pothouse.”

They had travelled many posts, at a sort of steady amble, along a high road "*moderato*," until they reached the last bar, when it was thought they would draw rein and bait. But Lady Laura, who had secured end chairs for her party, a judicious coigne of 'vantage, and who already was suffering mental and physical pain, and had been glancing wearily from side to side, now sadly convinced that a harem-like seclusion was indeed to prevail, saw with a sudden sinking of the heart, each page "turned back," and the four artists begin their journey again. It was a "repeat." When the stage was happily accomplished, there was a little pause, and Lord Puttenham led off applause, with interjections of "What tone! I never heard tone before!" Then came an entreating "Hus-sh!" for the "quatuor" had recovered its instruments, and was proceeding into the "*adagio*."

This might be described to be a musical interment—they proceeded at such a slow and mournful walk—Ragwitz Bêla leading and drawing out wailing strokes with contortionate agonies—sometimes laying his fiddle like a dish under his own throat, as though he were anxious to decollate himself on the spot; sometimes quivering and straining as though he wished to drive his fiddle into his neck and lay it finally against the short joints of the spine; sometimes struggling with it, sometimes beckoning with it; sometimes making spasms with his knee and foot, as though he wished to rise and fly through the air with it. The others went to the work gloomily, and with awful concentration; and Piletti, who had charge of the violincello, seemed to have a conveniently-shaped coffin between his knees.

The mortuary music was at last over. Lady Laura, already worn and haggard, but still "coming up smiling," was feeling the cane pressure acutely. Poor soul! she was old and tall of figure, and required little comforts at home and abroad, not the rafter-like support imparted by cane chairs. Yet she smiled on, and took care that smiling should be kept up in the ranks; and when Providence at last brought the "first part" to a conclusion, she had a smile for Lord Puttenham drifting by her, and an ejaculation of ecstasy, "How lovely! Did you ever hear anything like it?"

A light and airy repast (as though the host was belonging to a severe Order) was laid on the stairs; and yet the company poured out and flung themselves on it with an avidity that seemed to hint that they had been shipwrecked, and newly taken off a rock.

Mrs. Fermor sat penned up on a centre chair, her eyes fixed on Ragwitz Bêla, whom she thought divine. Miss Manuel was in another part, while Fermor made part of a small crowd, herded together at the door.

Rude persons were pressing on him; and early in the night, when he was whispering a pleasant sarcasm to Young Bridges, Lord Puttenham had tapped him bluntly on the shoulder,

and said, rather roughly, "You must go outside if you want to talk." He was looking over at Miss Manuel—looking sourly—for sitting beside her was that "low, ill-bred, insolent" Mr. Romaine, who had been so forward at the brougham door.

At this happy release—the end of the first part—Mr. Romaine left Miss Manuel, and came over to Mrs. Fermor. A cane chair creaked as he dropped into it. Fermor was about offering to take down Miss Manuel, when Lord Puttenham, just behind him, touched him on the arm: "Beg pardon, let me pass, please. Miss Manuel, come!" And Miss Manuel went away gaily on Lord Puttenham's arm.

As she passed Mrs. Fermor she stooped down and whispered, "Be kind to poor Romaine to-night. He is afraid of you. He is to be pitied, poor fellow. Guess who are here—the Mas-singers, who were to have been in Rome. You will, I am sure." And pressing her arm affectionately, she passed on.

"You are still angry," said Mr. Romaine; "I can see it. Yet I am the one who ought to suffer, after that awful onslaught on me the other day."

Mrs. Fermor bit her red lip, but smiled in spite of herself. "You began," she said.

"I know," he said; "I always begin. Every man and every woman tells me so. And yet I cannot help it. I am worried and tried. No one understands me, or, of course, tries to understand me. Why should they, indeed?"

Mrs. Fermor looked at him with bright and sympathising eyes.

"You judge us all very harshly," she said; "we are not all so bad as you think."

"Why not?" he said. "I begin to hate the world. I used to believe in it. I found my account in it, for I never accepted the rubbish about a 'hollow world,' and its faithlessness, and that cant. But now I feel shaken. I have seen something to-night that has shaken me. If that faith has left me, I have nothing to trust to."

Mrs. Fermor was filled with a sort of missionary enthusiasm. She thought how, in her own weak way, she might confirm and strengthen this strange being.

"I can feel for you," she said, softly, "indeed I can. But I would not give way, if you would listen to me. I would fight bravely—as I know you have done," she added, colouring a little at her own boldness; "you would struggle on, and you would find strength as you went on, and you would, at the end, conquer, and conquer splendidly. You should do that, Mr. Romaine, and you would be helped by the sympathies of your friends."

She was quite excited, and he looked at her half astonished, half interested. The look, however, was gradually gliding into a sneer. "But no," he said, "I won't. I was going to be sarcastic about 'struggles,' &c., but I won't. Thank you. I really do thank you for your advice. Not that I think it will profit me, for I am past that, but I thank you all the same."

"But," she went on more eagerly still, "you must let it profit you. You will try, I am sure. A little will do it. It is only a sacrifice, and we must all make sacrifices."

"Well," he said, a little roughly, "and I was willing to make sacrifices. I went through it all, and suffered, God knows how much. No matter! the thing was done, and here is the whole thing to begin again. But I forget, you don't know what I am talking of."

"But I do," said Mrs. Fermor, with a naïve toss of her head. "I have heard, and, indeed, I sympathise."

"Well, so far, at least, I have done well—for to-night I mean—come!" said Mr. Romaine.

"Yes," said she, "but you must go on; we must encourage you."

"It is very hard," he said with a sigh. "Look over there and say if it is not very hard."

Mrs. Fermor looked over, with great curiosity, and saw a fair snowy girl—a little insipid, perhaps—"cream laid"—but tall and fair, sitting and smiling, and receiving polite adoration from two gentlemen.

"There!" said Mr. Romaine, bitterly; "that was once my Marguerite. She has married Valentine after all, and become homely. Look at him over there—Fatuity incorporate! Yet Valentine is restless and troubled in his mind. He doesn't relish Marguerite's doings. I almost wish he may be more troubled yet."

"Hush, hush," said Mrs. Fermor, with coquettish reproof. "You have promised to struggle, recollect."

"And how am I to do it? I am alone. I have no one to help me—to encourage me."

Mrs. Fermor smiled.

"We will all do our best. That is not much, but we will try."

"If," said Mr. Romaine looking at her fixedly, "there was any one who would bear with me, and talk with me, and whisper good things now and again, and say kind words of encouragement when I felt my strength giving way—" He stopped and waited a moment.

With great eagerness, and longing to make a neophyte of him, and have the glory of converting one of these rude rough splendidly savage men, Mrs. Fermor said, with a smile, that she would be glad to have this Samaritan office now and again.

Alas! This was but a fatal species of missionary labour. And Miss Manuel, sweeping by on Lord Puttenham's arm to her chair, saw the two faces close together, and the little innocent delight in Mrs. Fermor's, and a sort of flash of triumph in the other's. Behind Miss Manuel was walking Nemesis, like a page.

CHAPTER XIII. A DISCOVERY AND A MISSION.

YOUNG BRETT did not come that night until late. Miss Manuel had been looking for him, and beckoned to him from the door, where he had made one of the herd. He flew to her. "Sit down beside me," she said. "Get that chair."

A lady, with the true selfishness which is roused by chairs, and chairs only, was adroitly spreading herself over two chairs, which she seemed to occupy debatably—not wholly on or wholly off. Another claimant she would have frozen off with look, manner, and answer. But there was a good-humoured graciousness about Young Brett which saved him, and a sort of homage which she took as payment for the chair. He was allowed to take it.

"My dear child," said Miss Manuel, "you have been always so true, and so kind, and so faithful to me, and to us all, that I would ask of you things that I would not ask of others. Would you do something for me now—something very troublesome, and very important?"

"O," said Young Brett, in a tumult of gratitude—it was as though she had accepted the gun at last—"how kind, how good of you! Now you are making me happy. What is it?"

She was indeed making him happy. For months he had been panting to get an opportunity to do something for her. He thought it was money, and he had plunged his hand eagerly into his pocket.

Miss Manuel smiled. "No, no," she said, "not that. Then I may tell you? Would you go on a journey for me?"

Young Brett half jumped up. "Is that it? To be sure. When—now? Though—O my goodness!" and his face fell. "I have to join the day after to-morrow. What shall I do?"

"Join, of course," said she, good humouredly. "I must go myself—I shall not get any one else."

"But I *must* go," said he, in real distress. "I shall manage it—leave it to me. I know some one that will get it—and if they don't, why—I am beginning to get very tired of the whole business—and—"

"Not for the world!" said she, in real alarm. "You must not think of it."

"But I see how it can be done," he said, joyfully, "and without that. Leave it to me. Where do you want me to go to?"

"First, then," said she, "it is to be secret. The place is Beaumaris, in Wales, and the house is called Bangor House, looking on the green. Now, I want you to go down, lodge there for a week or ten days, and find out all about the people who lodged there before—that is, seven or eight months ago. It will be useful for me to know. Mind, everything. Everything will be welcome, and everything useful. Will you think it cruelly unreasonable to do this?"

She saw delight in his face, and gratitude too, for being chosen for such a mission.

"This is really kind," he said; "I was getting so bored with London. I was really thinking of a week at Bangor, or some of those places. It just falls in nicely—that is, I mean," he added, growing grave as he thought of his first statement, "if I had got leave."

"Hu-sh!" came from Lord Puttenham; "no talking, please!"

In fact, the second part was beginning, and Ragwitz Béla was now giving his great Hungarian solo, Verbocsy Czárdás, in which he first "agonised," and swung, and shocked, and wailed, and quivered through a "largo appassionato," and presently was plucking, and tearing, and mangling his strings (as though they had been his own hair) through ten terrible spasms, called "variations." He worried his violin as though it were a rat; he seemed to long to bring his teeth into play, and to work at it with that extra power. He dug his fingers into its bowels, and seemed to root and tear at its heart. He made it yell and groan; and, at the end of each variation, tucked it violently under his arm, as it were to smother it up like a child, and mopped his face and hands in moist exhaustion. This was Ragwitz Béla and his solo, which at last happily ended.

Later on, Mr. Romaine was looking with interest on his pleasant little missionary. Said he to her, with a sort of low plaintive music he would throw into his voice; "I have a rude log-house of my own, rude and unfurnished as myself. Civilised people call it Chamber. There I can be as lonely and as savage as I like. Sometimes the Charitable come and see me, and relieve my wants. I have curiosities to show—something that would amuse. At least, people tell me so. I could get your friend Miss Manuel to come, and if you would care to meet her there to-morrow evening, say at five—"

But Mrs. Fermor shrunk away from this scheme. Alarm came into her face. Mr. Romaine was hurrying on too fast, and this was being too bold. She answered coldly, and yet with agitation:

"No, no. I never go anywhere in *that* way. Don't ask me, please. No, I am very sorry."

She seemed to awake suddenly. All the new Missionary Ordination had gone for nothing. Mr. Romaine did not relish any plan of his being rejected; so he rose hastily, and flung himself on his feet. "Very well," he said. "With all my heart. I am sorry. But it can't be helped." He stalked away to the door. ("He is a dangerous person," thought Mrs. Fermor, looking after him in dread.) At the door he passed Miss Manuel.

"Poor Romaine!" she said. "Keep up your heart. Things will go better another time, and in another direction. But recollect, I warned you! You think a little too highly of yourself!"

"I shall not go with you to supper to-night," he said. "At least, I have half determined not to. But it is not over yet, *that* little business."

Lady Laura Fermor had sat unto the end—would have sat had it been hours longer. Faithful captain! She had ceased to suffer pain. A sort of dull numbness came on. You would have said she was enjoying pleasure, for she hung out mechanical smiles, like Signs, at regular intervals. And she found her reward. For the youth, Lord Spendlesh, whose father was happily dead (within three months, but the boy had really shown feeling in

keeping himself retired so long), was there in decent black gloves, and had actually got to a chair beside Blanche. He was rich, empty, vain, and foolish—a combination of good qualities that Lady Laura always admired.

At the end of Lord Puttenham's musical party, Miss Manuel was at the door, on the inside, and people, as they passed, had little flying "chats," each no longer than ten seconds. That night she was to have one of her compact little suppers, and she was enrolling a few. Young Brett, with confidence and the brightness of hope on his little forehead, posted past her. There was meaning in his eyes. She was talking with Westley Kerr, an agreeable man, when Young Brett said, meaningly, as he passed, and with secret mystery:

"Bangor House, Beaumaris—all right, Miss Manuel!" and she smiled to him that he was right.

But the next instant a face was put round the door from the outside—Major Carter's face, but so drawn and contorted, so contracted with fury, terror, and wonder, that Miss Manuel hardly knew it. It was laid against the sill of the door and came close to hers.

"Take care," he said. And though the voice was low and hoarse, he wore the old trained smile. "Take care, I warn you! What you are doing is dangerous. I tell you in time, take care, or—"

"Take care!" said Lord Puttenham's cheery voice, "what is Miss Manuel to take care of, Carter?"

"Of the draught, my lord," said Major Carter, pleasantly. "Standing in these doorways is a little perilous. I give warning in time always."

A flash of fire passed from Miss Manuel's eyes direct to his face. "I have a strong constitution," she said, "and fear nothing!"

EARTH.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

On the 24th of May, 1863, Herr Otto Lidenbrock, Professor at the Johanneum of Hamburg, hurried home to No. 19, Königstrasse, with a precious acquisition under his arm—a marvellous old volume, the Heims-Kringla, or Chronicle of Norwegian Princes who reigned in Iceland, by Snorre Turleson, the famous Icelandic author of the twelfth century.

While displaying this treasure to his nephew Axel, there dropped out of it a slip of parchment inscribed with Runic characters. The Runic being changed for Roman letters, a series of unintelligible words was the result, which evidently formed a cryptogram or intelligence conveyed in a secret form. The author of the cryptogram was probably some former possessor of the book; and on one corner of the fly-leaf was discovered in Runic letters the name of Arne Saknussem, a learned Icelandic alchemist and traveller who flourished in the middle of the sixteenth century.

In vain did the Professor cudgel his brains to read the Runic cryptogram. He deprived himself of food and sleep; and the harder he tried to interpret it, the more utter nonsense it became. At last, by mere chance, young Axel discovered that, by turning it upside down, and reading it so, it stated, in dog Latin, "Descend, adventurous traveller, into that crater of the extinct Yocul, Sneffels, on which the shadow of Scartaris falls at noon during the Calends of July, and you will reach the centre of the earth: Which I have done. Arne Saknussem."

The ardent Professor resolved forthwith to undertake the expedition; and compelled his reluctant nephew to join him in this novel excursion. Their travels from Hamburg to, and in, Iceland, though interesting, are irrelevant to the present paper. They engaged one Hans Bjelke, a collector of eider-down by trade, and a giant in strength, to accompany them as factotum and guide, and safely reached the craters of Sneffels. On a neighbouring rock, the words "Arne Saknussem," carved in Runic letters, assured them they were on the right road; and on the 28th of June the shadow of Scartaris fell on the orifice which was to conduct them to the centre of the globe.

Slipping from rock to rock by the help of ropes, they reached the bottom of a perpendicular chimney, three thousand feet deep, where they passed the night. Their non-fragile luggage had been simply thrown down; the rest they carried on their backs, like walking tourists. A lava gallery, branching off to the east, turned out a blind-alley, in spite of their Ruhmkorff electrical lanterns. They retraced their steps, and took another tunnel which sloped to the west. While striding down this, at a rapid pace, their water fell short. Hans smote the rock with his pick-axe, when out gushed a boiling spring, which sorely scalded their hands and lips. They had then only to follow it, until it cooled down into Hansbach, and so became potable. It was their fountain, their companion, and their guide, leading from the lowest depths to lower still, for days and days. Somewhere hereabouts, Axel lost at once, himself, the water-course, and his lantern; notwithstanding which, he opened telegraphic communication with his uncle, by acoustic means resembling those which have endowed St. Paul's with a whispering-gallery. Groping in the dark to rejoin his friends, he fell, slipped, and was shot down an inclined plane of unknown length, until he lost consciousness. This he regained in a grotto suffused with soft light, under the careful treatment of the Professor and Hans, and at a depth (warranted;—see the calculations) of one hundred miles below the earth's surface. They had experienced only a slight increase of heat; therefore, in the uncle's opinion, no central fire exists. Volcanic, and other like phenomena, according to him, are nothing but the chemical effects of inflammable metals coming in contact with air and water. The nephew, in spite of these extraordinary discoveries, would never renounce his belief that the earth's nucleus is still on fire.

When Axel was well enough to leave his grotto, he found himself on the shore of a sea which its discoverer chose to name the Lidenbrock. A vast sheet of water, the extremity of a lake or ocean, stretched far out of sight. The waves broke on a sandy beach with the sonorous murmur peculiar to the interiors of very large edifices. The shore was bounded by buttresses of rock which rose to an immeasurable height. Every detail of the picture was brought out by singular effects of light—not the light of the sun with his brilliant beams, nor the pale and uncertain glimmer of the moon, which is merely a reflexion devoid of heat. The illuminating power here, by its tremulous diffusion, its dry and clear whiteness, and its moderate temperature, betrayed its purely electrical origin. It was a sort of aurora borealis—a continuation of a cosmical phenomenon—which pervaded this cavern capable of containing a sea. But the word cavern conveys no idea of the immensity of the hollow. The vault overhead, the sky if you will, seemed composed of large clouds and changeable vapours, which, by the effects of condensation, must at certain times fall in torrential rains. That day the weather was fine. Electric sheets produced a wonderful play of light on the highest clouds; but it was not sunshine. The effect was the reverse of cheerful—melancholy rather. Instead of a firmament spangled with brilliant stars, above the clouds there was felt to exist a vault of granite which seemed to crush you with its weight. In short, the adventurers were imprisoned in an enormous excavation. Neither its length nor its breadth could be guessed at. The eye soon found itself arrested by a vague and undecided horizon. Its height evidently exceeded several leagues.

Walking round a promontory, they fell upon a group of lofty, colourless, umbrella-shaped trees. Currents of air seemed to have no effect upon their branches, which remained as motionless as those of petrified cedars. On approaching nearer, the Professor discovered them to be gigantic mushrooms, thirty or forty feet high. There they were, by thousands, standing so thick that complete obscurity reigned beneath their fleshy domes. There were also lycopods of phenomenal dimensions, tree ferns, giant sigillarias, forked lepidodendrons, and the whole flora of the second epoch of the world, the period of transition. Never did living botanist enjoy such a treat before.

And where was this wonderful sea? Horizontally, it was distant three hundred and fifty leagues from Iceland, at a vertical depth of forty leagues, exactly under the Grampian Hills. In spite of all its novelty, the explorers led a monotonous life. The air being constantly luminous, day and night were both alike. So they built a raft, with the intention of crossing the sea. On the raft, they amused themselves with fishing, and caught fish belonging to families which, on earth, have been extinct for ages. Moreover, all their specimens were blind; and not blind only, but absolutely deprived of organs

of sight—a peculiarity sometimes met with in the inhabitants of subterranean waters.

During their passage, they nearly caught a tatar, in the shape of a living ichthyosaurus, an antediluvian monster with the snout of a porpoise, the head of a lizard, and the teeth of a crocodile. Luckily, its attention was diverted from the raft by the appearance of its sworn enemy, a plesiosaurus—a serpent thirty feet long, with a tortoise's shell forty feet wide, and great goggle eyes as big as your head. This pretty pair, closing with admirable pluck, fought an unrecorded number of rounds for a couple of hours. At last, by a clever dodge, the ichthyosaurus gave the decisive blow, and left his adversary for dead.

After this episode, the raft was assailed by a storm, which drove them back to a point near their starting-place. On landing, they were startled by finding on the sand—not, like Robinson Crusoe, a footprint—but a dagger of the sixteenth century. A human visitor had, therefore, preceded them. But who? A rock close by, carved with the Runic letters A. S., proved that it must have been Arne Saknussemm himself. Onward, then, to follow his steps! How did he get away from the Subterranean Sea? Evidently, down this gallery, which is closed by a fallen mass of rock. The rock must be blown up by gun-cotton.

When all was ready to spring the mine, the adventurous three set light to the match, and then, retreating to their raft, pushed out from shore to a prudent distance. The match had been calculated to burn ten minutes. The Professor, chronometer in hand, anxiously awaited the result of the explosion. "Five minutes more," he said, "and then!—Four minutes!—Three!—Two!—In one minute!"

Whether their ears heard the explosion, the travellers could never remember. The form of the surrounding rocks suddenly changed. They opened like a curtain, and displayed a yawning abyss, dark, fathomless, into which the sea poured, like a monster Niagara, carrying with it the raft and its burden. In less than a second, light gave place to utter darkness. The travellers clung together in despair. For hours they were carried down by the torrent, with a speed to which the swiftest railway rates are sluggishness. They turned their backs to the air through which they rushed, to avoid being suffocated. They glided no more; they fell, with still increasing velocity. Suddenly, after an interval of time which they could not estimate, they felt a sort of shock. The raft, without meeting any solid obstacle, was suddenly arrested in its course. An immense sheet of water drenched its surface. The explorers were choked—all but drowned. Nevertheless, the inundation did not last. Their lungs again breathed the air freely. They held together bravely; the raft still carried all the three—and they had reached the centre of the globe! How they got back (for they did get back) to the surface, the reader will learn by perusing M. Jules Verne's *Voyage au Centre de*

la Terre: of whose scenery, spirit, and science, this slight summary gives but a faint idea.

For a less flighty excursion into the interior we must gain the foot of Mont Cenis, where men are boldly grappling with one horn of an awkward dilemma. The railway is complete from Paris to Turin, except over Mont Cenis, which is still traversed by horse-power instead of steam.

But the piercing of Mont Cenis by a tunnel presents simply a choice between two difficulties. By taking the high and circuitous line, the railway would have to mount to the region of snow-storms and avalanches. During a great part of the year it would be dangerous and impracticable, unless protected by a covered gallery, the expense of which would be very great. Such a railway, with such a gallery, though more quickly executed than a tunnel, would stand in need of constant repair, and with every precaution must at times be unsafe. On the other hand, a tunnel once bored through a mountain of rock, would last for ever. It was resolved to undertake the tunnel.

But the tunnel of Mont Cenis, or rather of the Col de Fréjus (for, if the road passes over the Col of Mont Cenis, the railway will pass under the Col of Fréjus), offered special difficulties. Most tunnels can be attacked at several points of their course at once, by sinking wells or galleries, which serve both for ventilation and the extraction of excavated material. When the fragments of the tunnel are all joined, the whole is finished. But in piercing such a mass as Mont Cenis, wells or slanting galleries were next to impossible. The tunnel could be begun at two places only, namely, at each end: and the further it advances, the greater is the difficulty of introducing fresh air and extracting the rubbish. New methods of piercing the rock and of ventilation had to be invented. Its projectors might well have been excused for renouncing the accomplishment of a subterranean gallery twelve thousand metres, or seven miles and a half, in length.

Attempts were made to do without powder for blasting the rock, in order to avoid the vitiation of the air consequent on explosions. Boring the rock by steam power was proposed; but the steam-engine also consumes oxygen. It ended in using sportsmen's instead of miners' gunpowder, and by boring the blast-holes with a machine set in motion by air compressed with the force of six atmospheres. The air is compressed by pumps worked by the waterfalls, of which there is no scant. Gas-lamps have been substituted with advantage for oil-lamps; gun-cotton has been thought of to replace gunpowder; and sucking-pumps to draw out the foul air through long tubes.

The extraction of the rubbish is very slow work. At the distance of from a thousand to fifteen hundred metres from the mouth of the tunnel, it requires about six hours, including in that period about two hours for firing the mines; which time will increase as the distance increases. The boring of the holes is performed

three times as quickly by machinery as by the ordinary methods. The tunnel is excavated, by machinery only, three metres high and three metres wide; its final dimensions are intended to be eight metres high and ten broad. By what means it is to be so enlarged, still remains undecided. During 1862, on an average, a metre per day was excavated at each end, or two metres altogether. The ten thousand metres which remain to be excavated will therefore, at that rate, take something like twelve years to finish. Six years have already been employed on the tunnel; the whole time of its execution will consequently be eighteen years. At first, it was expected to be finished in six years. But eighteen years, a large portion of the life of an individual, are as nothing in the life of a nation. Many cathedrals and other public monuments have taken a much longer time to complete.

To supplant the old-fashioned borer, M. Leschot has invented a tool which consists of a metal ring studded with fragments of black diamond—a harder variety than the ordinary diamond—and which is therefore employed to polish it. The ring, by means of a cylindrical stem worked by machinery, is made to grind an annular hole in the rock. When the hole is nearly a yard deep, the tool is withdrawn, and what remains inside the hole is easily extracted. Thus a gem, usually employed for personal decoration, has rendered industrial services, and has become an auxiliary in the making of a railway. Instead of employing diamond or steel, Hannibal is said to have opened rocks by the application of vinegar. All we can say is, that the vinegar of that day must have been considerably stronger than our own.

The latest intelligence informs us that the public impatience is not likely to wait even ten years for the completion of the Alpine tunnel; but that, until it be finally opened, a temporary and provisional railway is to be carried over the mountain. The locomotives to be employed were tried last winter in the Derbyshire hills, and were found quite equal to the task of scaling and descending the most rapid slopes of Mont Cenis. The French government desires to see the experiment made on its own territory, and upon the very spot where it is to be practically applied; it has accordingly authorised the construction of a few kilometres of rail between Lanslebourg and the summit of the Cenis, in the steepest and most difficult part of the whole line. This strip of rail is expected to be completed in February next, at latest, when trains will be run by way of trial. That time of the year is usually the very worst for the mountain, so that success then will be success for ever.

The English capitalists and engineers who have undertaken this mountain railway are perfectly easy as to the result. The contractors promise to convey, at all times of the year, a train of from a hundred to a hundred and fifty passengers, with their baggage, and the post-office bags, in four and a half hours, from Susa

to St. Michel. They are to build tunnels or covered galleries in places where danger of avalanches renders it necessary. The difference made to travellers will be immense. Both in coming and going, the mountain would be crossed by broad daylight, instead of in the dark, as is now the case, and tourists would enjoy the scenery at present completely lost to them. Once fairly over the Cenis, the ambitious rail will in future laugh at mountain impediments; and it is expected that the example will be extensively followed for the passage both of Alps and Apennines, the more so as the cost of these mountain lines is said very slightly to exceed that of railways in the plain.

TALL PEOPLE.

THE same Professor Quetelet who weighed all the people of whom he could get hold, to ascertain against how many pounds avoirdupois they could turn the scale,* has also measured them with a foot rule, or metre standard, to see what was their altitude, or longitude. He adopted the same plan in the one case as in the other. He obtained permission to carry his weights and measures to certain foundling hospitals, where there is always more than a plentiful supply of children; to barracks, where young men of the healthy ages are congregated; to asylums, in which there are examples of the weak and the aged, counterbalancing the evidence furnished by the young and healthy; to universities and schools, where young fellows and hobble-de-hoys rule the market; and to factories, in which sedentary labour somewhat stunts the growth. These he compared with groups of individuals living in various places, and occupied in a great diversity of employments, with a view to a fair and candid deduction as to the average height of full-grown persons. Giants and dwarfs he cared nothing about, nor prodigies of any other kind.

Beginning with those very important personages, the babies, M. Quetelet remarks, that, "before Buffon, no inquiries had been made to determine the rate of human growth, successively from birth to maturity; and even this celebrated naturalist cites only a single particular example; neither has he examined the modifying influences which age exerts on height." M. Quetelet gives all the heights in metres and decimals; but as we in England have not yet got rid so completely of our insular singularity as to imitate continental nations in this particular, it may be well to translate his measures into English feet and inches, at the rate of (about) three feet three inches and a half to the metre. Well, then, children a day old are found to be about nineteen inches long, some a little more, and some a little less. The Foundling Hospital at Paris agrees with that at Brussels in this average.

* See No. 191, page 352: Fat People.

Of course the extremes vary. Of five hundred day-old infants at Paris the lengths varied from seventeen to twenty-two inches; but very few of them deviated far from nineteen. What relation the gallant Generals and Commodores of the dwarf family bear to these numbers, we need not stop to inquire. The boy-babies—nature's nobles in the bud—are usually about half an inch longer than the girls. At five years old, according to rather an elaborate tabulation by M. Quetelet, the average height of French and Belgian boys and girls is three feet three inches; at ten years old, four feet two; at fifteen years old, five feet; and at twenty years old, when the difference of height in the two sexes is greater than at any earlier age, five feet six inches for young men, and five feet two inches for young women. Girls are nearer to their full height at sixteen than boys; in other words, a maiden is *relatively* as tall at sixteen as a youth is at eighteen, the sex and full growth of each being taken into account. As regards country and town life, M. Villermé has ascertained, contrary to the generally received notion, that the inhabitants of towns are, on an average, a little taller than those of country districts. M. Quetelet found the same rule to apply in Brabant; where, after nearly ten thousand measurements, he ascertained that town people are, on an average, three-quarters of an inch taller than country folk. Much discussion has taken place in connexion with the question at what age we cease to grow. M. Quetelet shows that, in Belgium at any rate, men not only grow between twenty and twenty-five years of age, but even on to thirty. Among nine hundred soldiers and recruits whom he measured, this was perceptibly the case, although the increase was, of course, but small. Dr. Knox, of Edinburgh, some time ago observed a similar fact; young men, leaving the university at twenty or twenty-two years of age, and returning seven or eight years afterwards, had increased, not only in breadth but in height. The average height of conscripts, twenty years old, taken from the whole of France, for renewing the imperial armies, is found to be five feet three inches and a half. Were it not that the French are very accurate in these matters, one might almost doubt whether the average was so low. Only one French soldier in forty, is above five feet eight high; many of them barely reach five feet. It is the opinion of army surgeons that the maintenance of large standing armies tends to lessen the average height of the population of a country, by various direct and indirect agencies. Mr. Cowell, one of the factory inspectors, some years ago measured as well as weighed many of the factory operatives at various ages; but as Lancashire mill-folk are very prone to wooden shoes of formidable thickness, and as it is not stated whether Mr. Cowell included or excluded these substantial under-standings, it may be well to pass over his tabulations unnoticed. Young men in a good station of life are rather taller than those who

have more privations to bear. Of eighty Cambridge students, between eighteen and twenty-three years of age, the average height was over five feet nine. It appears to be pretty certain, from the average of a large number of instances, that the height remains constant only from about the age of thirty to that of fifty; a slight average growth until the former limit, a slight average diminution after the latter. Among all the adults of all classes measured by M. Quetelet, he found that fully developed and well-formed men varied from four feet ten to six feet two, with an average of five feet six; and that fully developed and well-formed women varied from four feet seven to five feet eight, with an average of about five feet two. Professor J. D. Forbes, of Edinburgh, about thirty years ago, measured about eight hundred young fellows at Edinburgh University; those at twenty-five were a little, and only a little, taller than those at twenty, and presented an average of five feet nine and a half: Irishmen being a little taller at that age than Scotchmen, and Scotchmen a little taller than Englishmen. But these had their shoes and boots on, and were nearly all from the well-to-do classes. And, moreover, as the professor remarks, little men don't like to come forward to be measured.

All things considered—shoes taken off, various classes selected, and all ages from twenty to sixty—the average of well-formed Englishmen cannot be far removed from five feet seven, about an inch taller than average Belgians, and rather more in excess of average Frenchmen.

Learned people say that tall people owe their tallness to a great variety of circumstances. M. Villermé remarks, that "human height becomes greater, and the growth takes place more rapidly, other circumstances being equal, in proportion as the country is richer, the comfort more general, houses and clothes and nourishment better, labour and fatigue and privation during infancy and youth less; or, in other words, the circumstances accompanying misery postpone the period of the complete development of the body, and stint human nature." M. Virey, in the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Médicales*, points to the fact that intense cold and dry heat tend alike to dwarf the population: a moist temperate climate being better than either. The Lapps, Samoëdes, Ostiacks, Koriacks, Kamtchadales, and Esquimaux, are all diminutive. The Poles, Livonians, Danes, Prussians, and English, are a little taller than Austrians, Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards, owing (as he thinks) to living in more temperate climates. Livy and Pliny used to say that the Germans and Gauls were taller than the Greeks and Romans. Some philosophers think that, as the equatorial regions of the earth revolve in their daily course with greater velocity than the polar, and as the centrifugal force is thereby greater, it may be that *this* is the reason, or one reason, why tropical mountains and tropical trees are taller than mountains and trees elsewhere; and they ask, are tropical men and

women taller from the same cause? When we know more of Central Africa and Central Brazil than we now know, perhaps an answer may be obtainable to that question. As to the gigantic Patagonians, who appear in our old Voyages and Travels as mighty men, eight, nine, and even ten feet high, they have settled down into stalwart fellows about six feet high; Patagonia is so far down towards the Antarctic regions as to puzzle our theorists a little. M. Virey tells us that, during the American War of Independence, the Arkansas Indians were regarded as the noblest-looking men in North America; a cargo of hats was sent out to them from Paris, but the hats were much too small to fit the heads. By universal testimony, little people are found to be more sharp, smart, and dapper than tall people. M. Virey says: "Tall men are generally much more weak and slow than short men, for all exertions both of body and mind. If men of high stature are preferred, for their fine appearance, in the body-guard of princes, and in the service of eminent persons, they are certainly neither the most robust nor the most active; but they are docile, candid, and naïve, little prone to conspire for evil, and faithful even to the worst master. In war, they are more fitted for defence than attack; whereas an impetuous and brusque action suits better for short and vivacious men. Tall men are mostly tame and insipid, like watery vegetables; inasmuch that we seldom hear of a very tall man becoming a very great man. Little men manifest a character more firm and decided than those lofty and soft-bodied people, whom we can lead more easily both morally and physically." Let all little men rejoice at such an opinion as this, and especially at the following incident: An empress of Germany, in the seventeenth century, to gratify a whim, caused all the giants and dwarfs in the empire to be brought to court. As it was feared that the giants would terrify the dwarfs, means were taken to keep the peace; but instead of this, the dwarfs teased, insulted, and robbed the giants to such an extent, that the lengthy fellows complained, with tears in their eyes; and sentinels had to be posted to protect the giants from the dwarfs.

Biblical and mythical and classical histories tell us much about tall people which we cannot well understand at the present day. Og, King of Bashan, whose bed was fifteen feet long; the Rephaims, Emims, and Enacians, who were reputed nations of giants; Goliath, the mighty warrior, eleven feet high; the Emperor Maximus, nine feet high; Gabarus the Roman, nine feet nine inches high; the monster Scotchman, eleven feet high, living under King Eugene the Second (whoever he may have been); the exhumed coffin, eleven feet long, containing mortal remains, which crumbled into dust on being exposed to the air—all these are noticed by Le Cat, together with other people fifteen, twenty, or even thirty feet high. Peace be to them! Sir Hans Sloane and Baron Cuvier proved that the bones of many so-called giants were really the bones of quadrupeds. Who can tell us any-

thing about the great bed at Ware? Who slept in it? Did he tuck himself in? Did his toes come down to the bed-foot? There was another celebrated bed the length of which we should like to know; Procrustes used to rack out the short men, and chop off the tall men, until they were exactly long enough to fit it.

Concerning such individuals as have had their altitude honestly recorded in actual feet and inches, for the admiration of posterity, we need say nothing about them unless they overtop six feet. We all of us meet occasionally with strapping fellows, Life Guardsmen and others, who exceed this limit by two or three inches. The Queen's army, it appears, possesses one soldier who belongs to the family of giants. What is known respecting him has been thus told recently in the *Edinburgh Courant*: "Corporal Moffat, of the Scots Fusilier Guards, at present staying at Kelso, on the recruiting staff, is believed to be the tallest soldier in the army. His height is six feet seven inches and a half, and he is proportionably stout. Corporal Moffat joined the Scots Fusiliers about two years and a half ago, is about twenty-four years of age, and is a native of Leitholm, near Kelso. Previous to joining the Fusiliers, he worked on the Duke of Roxburgh's estate, as a forester, for a considerable time. Growing tired of that occupation, he offered to join the Life Guards, but was rejected owing to his immense height and weight. Nothing daunted at this, Moffat determined, if possible, to join the Scots Fusiliers, and proceeded immediately to London for that purpose, and was quickly accepted. As Corporal Moffat is well known in the Kelso district, he will doubtless be of great assistance to the recruiting party stationed there." Corporal Moffat, may your shadow never be less! Many of the giants at the fairs range between six feet and a half and seven feet in height. Poor fellows! it used to be (perhaps still is) a part of the bargain between them and the showmen, that the latter should be allowed to sell the bodies of the giants to the surgeons after death. As to the seven feet men and upwards, the Long Lawyer, as he used to be called about thirty years ago, was unquestionably a member of this group. Cornelius Webb, in his *Glances at Life in City and Suburbs*, says of him: "He once affected to ride a cob; but it was soon perceived that he was walking, and that the little fellow was only trotting along between his legs—as it were, under his auspices. Sitting some time after dinner, one day, he remarked, on a sudden, that he would 'get up and stretch himself'; if you had seen the consternation, or if I could describe it! He would pertinaciously persist in travelling by one coach, when he ought to have gone in three; and as he was resolutely bent on riding inside, they made a hole through the roof for his head and shoulders, and got informed against for carrying luggage higher than the number of inches allowed by act of parliament. His tailor, when he measured him, like a sensible man, stood on a flight of steps; but three of his journeymen,

unused to such a perpendicular position, are said to have broken their necks. He never laughed till the laughing was over with all the rest of the audience; a joke took some time to travel from his ear to his midriff and tickle it to laughter. When he went to the pit of the theatre, the gods of the one shilling gallery cried out, 'Sit down, you Sir, in the two!' not perceiving, short-sighted creatures as they are, that he was many feet lower down than the midmost heaven." Joking apart, the Long Lawyer, a London solicitor, was really over seven feet in height. There died at York, in seventeen hundred and sixty-five, two persons who were twins in birth and nearly twins in height; for the brother was seven feet three inches, and the sister seven feet two; and yet these tall people were only seventeen years old. About the same time, there died one Mr. Bamford, a hatter in Shire-lane: he was famed far and wide for overlooking all his neighbours by a head and shoulders or so; but we have mislaid his feet and inches. The Annual Register requires us to believe that Ames M'Donald, who died near Cork, about the middle of the last century, was a hundred and seventeen years old, and seven feet six inches in height, when he died; but this is a poser, for giants rarely live to be old men. That Edmund Malone was seven feet six inches in height, we can more readily believe, for he was a young fellow in his prime. Dr. Musgrave, who noticed him in the Philosophical Transactions, states that his (middle?) finger was six inches and three-quarters long, his span fourteen inches, his cubit (the distance from the elbow to the finger-tips) twenty-six inches, and his arm thirty-eight inches long. Some of the writers of the last century tell of a Swede, Daniel Cajanus, who was seven feet eight inches in height. Of the same stature was Cornelius M'Grath, concerning whom a strange story was told by Watkinson, in his Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland. Speaking of the celebrated Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, Watkinson says: "The bishop had a strange fancy to know whether it was not in the power of art to increase the human stature. An unhappy orphan appeared to him a fit subject for trial. He made his essay according to his preconceived theory, whatever it might be; and the consequence was, that he (the orphan M'Grath) became seven feet high in his sixteenth year." But another and a more probable story is, that M'Grath was of ordinary stature till fifteen years of age; that he then shot up with amazing rapidity; that the good bishop kindly took him into his house while suffering from "growing pains;" that M'Grath then commenced a career of exhibiting as a giant; and that he died in England towards the close of the reign of George the Second. His full height was seven feet eight; and his hand, we are told, was "as large as a shoulder of mutton." Fortunately for the truth of this last statement, shoulders of mutton are not all of the same weight. In the year seventeen hundred and eighty, there was an "Irish youth" exhibiting at Charing-

cross, seven feet ten inches in height. Gaspard Bauhin speaks of a Swiss who was eight feet high; and Vander Linden of a Frisian of the same height. A skeleton eight feet long was dug up, in a Roman camp near St. Albans, in the last century; and Cheseldon, the celebrated anatomist, estimated that the living man must have been eight feet four inches in height. A giant, eight feet high, was exhibited at Rouen in seventeen hundred and thirty-five. Just before the close of the last century, Mr. Jenkins, a bank clerk, died; he was, by permission of the directors, buried in the ground within the building (not Soane's structure), formerly the churchyard of St. Christopher. This was done because he had a horror of being dissected, and because it was known that surgeons were trying quietly—not to catch him alive, but to catch him dead. There is some doubt about his height, but his outer coffin was eight feet long.

As for "O'Brien, the Irish giant," there is no identifying him with exactness. He was multiple. There was *one* of that name in the last century, who made so much noise, and gained so much money, that other giants afterwards took the name of O'Brien, and dubbed themselves Irish, as a good speculation. This is believed to be the true explanation of the fact that there have been Irish Giant O'Briens seven feet ten, eight feet two, eight feet four, and eight feet seven inches high. The skeletons of two of these mighty men are preserved in the Hunterian Museum, and that of a third in the Dublin Museum, while the remains of a fourth are interred in a Roman Catholic burial-ground at Bristol. One of the profitable O'Briens, whose real name was Patrick Cotter, "at Bath, on a cold night, terrified a watchman by quietly reaching up to a street lamp, and taking off the cover to light his pipe." He made a fortune by exhibiting himself, and had a carriage so constructed as to accommodate his very elongated person. One of this voluntary group of O'Briens, we do not know which, was exhibited in the Haymarket, and was announced in the handbill as "A lineal descendant of the old puissant King Brien Boreau, and has in person and appearance all the similitude of that great and grand potentate," of whom, of course, we ought to have cartes-de-visite somewhere or other. Moreover, "it is remarkable of this family that, however various the revolutions in fortune and alliance, the lineal descendants thereof have been favoured by Providence with the original size and stature which have been so peculiar to that family." Happy O'Briens! The Charles Byrne, "Irish Giant," who boasted of his eight feet three inches about eighty years ago, was possibly one of the O'Brien group, with the name slightly altered; he died through drinking, and had, like many persons of abnormal growth, a great horror of being dissected after death. A Swedish guardsman, in the service of Frederick the First of Prussia, was eight feet six inches high; which was also the height of a man noticed by Diemerbrœck, and the length of the skeleton of a woman described by Uffenbach.

Vanderbröck tells of a negro of Congo who was nine feet high; and Martin del Rio says that he saw a Piedmontese at Rouen, in fifteen hundred and seventy-two, who was nine feet high.

Beyond nine feet we decline to go. Higher numbers are rather suspicious, and cannot be relied upon. If tall people be half as tall again as ordinary people, which would make them about eight feet and a half in their stockings, this is surely a temple lofty enough for any well-constituted mind to dwell on.

A NAME.

SUCH a lovable face!
Over which not a trace
Of her thoughts as they rise need be missed;
Eyes, whence kindness beams out,
And lips, when they pout,
Seem to meet you half way to be kissed:

Smiles so radiant, that down
(She never *could* frown)
Her whole form they appear to expand;
Grace and tact so combined
In her touch, that though blind,
You would feel 'twas her fairy-like hand.

Her voice is so ringing,
So melodious, that singing
Is discord compared with her words;
When she laughs 'tis elation,
And you feel a sensation
Of sunshine and music and birds.

Her name! O when sad
If I think it, I'm glad;
But when spoken, or written in rhyme, a
Strong word flies in haste
At her sponsors' bad taste,
For why *did* they call her JEMIMA?

HOW WE "FLOATED" THE BANK.

"GIVE me a look in, if you are passing my way," wrote Mr. Hardy* one day to me, "for I think I have the very thing that would suit you."

Mr. Hardy was a most prosperous "Promoter" of companies, in the days—little more than a year ago—when the getting up of joint-stock concerns was by far the most lucrative business in the City, and I was a poor place hunter—a man trying to obtain a situation with a salary, that I could count upon as a monthly or quarterly certainty, even if the amount was small. Therefore, on the receipt of this note, I lost no time in proceeding to that gentleman's office, where I at once sent in my name to the great man himself. Unlike my first interview with this "Promoter of Companies," I was not kept waiting more than five minutes, and was then ushered into his private sanctum.

"I am glad you are come," said he, "for there is a new Joint-Stock Bank coming out, and although I have not much, if anything, to do with it myself, I have helped the promoters

a little, and can give you a line to the solicitors of the concern. If you can bring them a director or two, and play your cards well, it is very probable that you may get the secretaryship, which has not yet been given away." Saying this—writing and talking at the same time—Mr. Hardy sat down and scrawled a few lines of introduction to a legal firm near Lincoln's Inn, and gave me the note, accompanied with the following verbal advice: "When you see these and other gentlemen—any one, in short—connected with this or any other company, be bumptious, talk big, as if you could bring Rothschild, Baring, and Peabody as directors upon any company that you are connected with; do this, and you will prosper. Good-by. I shall be glad to hear how you get on." In another moment Mr. Hardy was, according to his old custom, rushing down stairs and across the street, holding a bundle of papers in his hand, one of which, I believe, was, as of old, a crossed cheque.

If I had not delayed in reparing to Mr. Hardy's office, how much quicker did I hasten to that of the solicitors in Lincoln's Inn! Where, on sending in Mr. Hardy's note and my own card, I at once obtained an interview with an elderly gentlemanly individual, clad in a new and shining suit of black, white twice-round-the-throat neckcloth, and high stand-up shirt-collar. Our conversation was short and to the point. Mr. May, the solicitor, knew me by name. "Was I not the nephew of Mr. Dant?" "Yes." "Would Mr. Dant join the board of the bank which Mr. May was projecting, provided I obtained the secretaryship?" "I could not reply for certain, but I would ask my relative." "Could I give an answer to-morrow?" "I believed I could. I would see my uncle and ask him." "Very well; if Mr. Dant joined the board, I should have the secretaryship of the bank: that was to be a bargain."

But what *was* the bank? Its magnificent title was:

THE GRAND FINANCIAL AND CREDIT
BANK OF EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, AMERICA, AND AUSTRALIA (LIMITED).

Capital,

ONE MILLION STERLING,

divided into one hundred thousand shares of one hundred pounds each, but that it was only contemplated to issue twenty-five thousand at present, and that not more than twenty-five pounds would be called up on each share; that one pound per share was to be paid on application for shares, and three pounds per share on allotment—in short, the usual formula with which all readers of the advertisements in newspapers have been made so well acquainted during the past eighteen months. After these announcements upon the prospectus, came the word "DIRECTORS," in very large letters, but of directors there was no list whatever—not one single name following the heading. The reason for this—so Mr. May told me, but whether I believed him is another

* See "Promoters of Companies," p. 110, vol. xi. of *All the Year Round*.

question—was that they had “so many first-class men, sir, offering to join them, that their great difficulty was in making the proper selection.” Below the word “DIRECTORS” came “MANAGER,” followed by “SECRETARY,” “SOLICITOR,” “AUDITORS,” “BANKERS,” and “BROKERS;” but to none of these was there any name affixed. It was very like a playbill in which the names of the pieces and the characters were put down, but to which the names of the actors had not yet been added. The piece was not yet cast. As a matter of course, the prospectus set forth that the future business of the proposed bank would be exceedingly large and highly profitable. That it was intended to have branches and agencies in Paris, New York, Madrid, Berlin, Melbourne, and Bombay. That already arrangements had been made to purchase the business of Messrs. Saloman and Company, of such a street; and that some thousands of the shares had already been applied for by the public. The latter assertion I knew, by a kind of instinct, was not true. However, my business was to get a good director or two for the company, and by this means to secure a berth for myself; and therefore, armed with half a dozen copies of the prospectus, I rushed out of Mr. May’s office, called the first Hansom I saw, and was quickly bowling away towards the West-end, where my uncle resided.

He was an old gentleman who had amassed a fair competency in China. All his sons were provided for and well started in the world, his daughters were married, and he, a widower, found that with between seven hundred and eight hundred a year, he could live very comfortably in lodgings, enjoying the conversation of his old friends at the Oriental Club, and his rubber of whist in the evening. He said he had had enough of business, that he had no faith in these new banks or finance companies, and that the small sum he should get every week for his attendance at the board-room, would be no inducement to him to undertake the trouble, worry, annoyance, and responsibility of being a director.

At last, upon my pressing him very much, and showing him what an excellent chance it would be for me to obtain a permanent situation, he not only consented to his name being put down, but promised to do his utmost to bring with him, as another director, an old friend—a retired Indian officer—with whom he was engaged to dine that evening at the Club of Anglo-Asiatics in Hanover-square.

Of course, this was excellent news for me, and our dinner at the Oriental was a double success. Not only did my uncle’s friend consent to join the board of the new concern, but he, too, brought a friend with him. The following morning I therefore arrived at Lincoln’s Inn-fields, and presented Mr. May with the written consent of three gentlemen who agreed to become directors, and thus a respectable nucleus of the board was formed.

But although three directors—more particularly when bearing respectable names—are some-

thing, they are not enough to form a direction. My part of the work was, however, done. Mr. May, who was the promoter—and was to be the solicitor—of the company, at once gave me an undertaking by which the secretaryship of the bank was secured to me, provided the company proceeded to allot the shares. In promoter’s slang, if the company floated, I was to have the berth I desired.

My three friends served admirably to draw other directors. Armed with them, our promoter was soon on his way to visit other parties in the City: persons whom he either hoped would join, or who could induce others to join, the direction.

At one of these interviews I happened to be present, and it was amusing, nay—for a future secretary not a little instructive—to observe how—promoter like—our future solicitor managed, without exactly telling a decided untruth, to suppress the truth most effectually. “Is your board really formed?” asked the gentleman. “Oh dear yes,” the promoter replied; “we have got Mr. Dant, formerly of the house of Maclean, Dant, and Company, in Hong-Kong; also General Fance, late of the Madras Army; also Mr. Westman, who was in the Indian Civil Service; besides several others;” the “several others” being purely imaginary. I knew quite well that Mr. May had secured no other directors, and he knew that I knew he was stating what was not true; nevertheless, he repeated it again and again to different persons, until he really seemed to believe his own falsehood.

At last, after about a month’s hard work, and rushing about in Hansom cabs, we got together the names of eight gentlemen who consented to become directors of The Grand Financial and Credit Bank of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia (Limited). *How* we managed this, it would take many pages of this periodical to tell in detail. Some of them joined us because the prospect of two, or perhaps three, guineas on every board-day—the board sits once a week in all Joint-Stock Banks—was an object of some moment to them. Others—like my own respected uncle—joined us on the understanding that they were to have this or that situation in the bank for some relative, connexion, or friend. Many were—indirectly—paid for joining us; that is to say, the promoter, Mr. May, would say to some acquaintance, “I will give you two hundred pounds if you procure me Mr. So-and-So as a director.” Perhaps the acquaintance had never seen Mr. So-and-So in his life, but he had an acquaintance who could manage to get introduced to another person who knew the gentleman. He managed, by paying the individual he knew, a ten pound note, to get introduced to the “other person,” and, by giving him three or four “fivers,” to obtain the desired introduction, which, when once accomplished, he offered, perhaps, a hundred pounds to the gentleman, provided he would join the direction of the new bank. None of these were ready-money transactions—such bargains never are. All payment of promotion money—all money paid, or to be paid,

directly or indirectly for directors, or for working out the scheme of "floating" a joint-stock company—is made contingent upon the shares being allotted to the public. If the concern does not proceed so far, all payments are considered "off." The usual—I might almost say the universal—way with promoters is to give an undertaking, of which the following may be regarded as an average specimen:

104, Little Green-street, London, E.C.,
14th October, 1864.

Dear Sir,—As promoter of "The Grand Financial and Credit Bank of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia (Limited)," I hereby undertake to pay you the sum of two hundred pounds sterling (say 200*l.*), should you succeed in obtaining the consent of Mr. So-and-So, of such a place, to become a director of the said bank. The money to be paid within seven days of the shares being allotted to the public, and on condition that the said Mr. So-and-So gives his written consent that his name may appear upon the prospectus of the company, and remain there for at least six months after the company shall be brought before the public.

I am, dear sir, yours truly,

N. MAY,

Solicitor and Promoter of the
above Company.

To Nicholas Sharpe, Esq.,
25, Grove-street, E.C.

Having obtained this undertaking, the first thing Nicholas Sharpe, Esq., does is to get it stamped at Somerset House, for which he pays the small sum of sixpence. He then proceeds to take his measures to catch his director, which he accomplishes by means like those I have pointed out, being generally a series of introductions which remind one of the House that Jack built. Of the two hundred pounds, not more than perhaps a fourth remains to him when all his expenses are paid. He has generally to give about one-fourth to the various worthies from whom he obtains the introductions, and has seldom less than half to give to the gentleman whom he brings in as a director. By the uninitiated it will be asked where all the money promised to be paid to directors, comes from? The reply is, it all comes out of that great nugget called the "promotion money," which is dug out of the pockets of the shareholders, so soon as the deposit money paid on application for shares flows into the treasury. In the "Articles of Association"—to which, be it remembered, all shareholders bind themselves in their application for shares—there is a clause inserted, which, in the case of our bank, was as follows:

In consideration of the trouble and expense to which Mr. May, the promoter of this company, has been put to, it is hereby agreed that he be paid the sum of five thousand pounds sterling as promotion money, within seven days of the company proceeding to allot their shares to the public.

It does not follow that the amount of promotion money is always the same. I have known it to be as high as ten thousand pounds, and as low as three thousand, according to the nature of the undertaking and the amount of

the proposed capital. But, although he retains by far the greater share of the cake, he is obliged, in order to obtain the wherewith to set his machine in motion, to part with some large slices of it.

Such slices induce many directors to join the new concern. These good things form part of what in promoters' language is called "the pull you get out of the concern." But there are other "pulls" which the directors, who join a company when it first starts, generally obtain, and among these not the least is that of being "qualified," gratis, to sit at the board. In every joint-stock concern, the directors are obliged, by the "Articles of Association," to hold a certain number of shares—generally forty or fifty—in the company, but gentlemen who join in order to get "a pull" out of the affair would be the last to lay out money in paying for shares. The result is, that the promoter of the company almost always offers to qualify directors—that is, to give them the requisite number of shares—gratis. It was so with The Grand Financial and Credit Bank of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia (Limited). Mr. May, our promoter, soon saw that to induce certain gentlemen to join the board, he must offer to qualify them, which he did: thus making them, as it were, a present of four hundred pounds each, in shares, for on each share they received it was stipulated that the calls to the amount of ten pounds should be written off as being paid, and thus they had only to wait until the first two calls were paid, when they could, if they wished, retire from the direction, sell their shares, and pocket four hundred pounds each.

With these various advantages, or "pulls"—viz. a certain amount of patronage in the bank, the two or three guineas for each director per week, a few slices of the promotion money, and being each "qualified" with forty shares on which ten pounds per share was paid—it is not to be wondered at that, in a very few weeks, we found our list of directors full, and very little wanting to launch the company on the sea of public opinion, there to float or sink, as fate might direct. Our prospectus was now filled; the parts of the play were cast. Under the word "DIRECTORS" came the list of those gentlemen—a list now swelled up to eight—and so pleased was Mr. May with the general appearance of these names, that he never seemed tired of contemplating the paper, of which I must give a copy as it stood when the bank was ready to be floated. Here it is:

THE GRAND FINANCIAL AND CREDIT BANK OF
EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, AMERICA, AND AUSTRALIA
(LIMITED).

Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1862.

CAPITAL, ONE MILLION.

With power to increase to 5,000,000*l.*

Twenty Thousand Shares of 50*l.* each; First Issue,
Ten Thousand Shares.

The Directors do not propose to call up more than
25*l.* per Share.

Chief Office in London.

With Branches in every important commercial
town in the world.

DIRECTORS.

G. F. Dant, Esq., Oriental Club (late of Messrs. MacLean, Dant, and Co., Hong-Kong and London).

Major-General Fance, The Grove, Buxton (late Military Secretary Madras Government).

Charles Westman, Esq., 108, Westbourne-square (late Madras Civil Service).

William Everett, Esq. (Director Liverpool Eastern Insurance Company).

C. T. Francatello, Esq. (Messrs. Francatello and Co., Minch-lane).

H. B. May, Esq., 75, Great Tooting-street.

Edward Spencer, Esq. (Director of the Mutual Trading Company, and of the Overland to Siberia Company).

Colonel T. Frost, 212, East Grove-terrace, Belgravia.

Mr. Everett lived two hundred and more miles from London, and although a man of business himself, never intended to sit at the board, for the reason that in all probability he would never be in the metropolis more than once in six months, and then only for a few hours at a time; Mr. Francatello was a Levantine commission agent, without fifty pounds of capital that he could call his own; Mr. H. B. May was a lad of nineteen (a brother of Mr. May, who was the promoter and solicitor of the company), and was put on the board partly to keep a little more of a "good thing" in the family, partly to vote as his brother directed; Mr. Spencer was a gentleman, whose only trade or calling was to become a director of anything that was offered him, for the sake of the two guineas a week it yielded him in fees; and lastly, Colonel Frost was an individual whose antecedents were best known to the officials of the Bankruptcy Court, and whose only property was a yearly increasing crop of debts. If the public at large had known all this, perhaps it might not have applied for many shares in our concern. But it was not for us to tell of our short-comings. We had gone through no small amount of trouble to do as well as we had—let others look to the inquiries that had to be made—each man for himself.

But now, on the very verge of success, there arose a difficulty which at first seemed insurmountable: nothing less than that old old story the want of money. Our directors—such as they were—were all in their places. A respectable bank had—goodness and the promoter knew how—consented to take our account; the names of Mr. May, as solicitor, of myself as secretary, of an accountant as auditor, were all in their places; in short, the curtain had but to be pulled up for the play to begin, when it was discovered that there were no funds forthcoming for the advertising expenses. Before the public can pay for shares, they must apply for them; before they can apply for them, they must know that the company has started; and the only recognised means of informing them is by advertising. But advertising is expensive. To make the British public fully aware that The Grand Financial and Credit was ready to take their money in exchange for share certificates, it was

necessary to insert a very long advertisement in the Times, and other papers. To advertise a prospectus of ordinary length for ten days or a fortnight, a sum of not less than from eight hundred to a thousand pounds is requisite, and this sum was not forthcoming. The directors individually did not see why one of their number any more than another should put his hand in his pocket. The bank might not float after all. And be it remembered that, up to this time, nothing but promises and undertakings had passed from one to another; money or cheques had not been as much as seen.

In this dilemma a meeting of the directors was called, at the temporary offices which Mr. May had borrowed gratis from a friend for a few weeks, giving the said friend an undertaking that, if the bank floated, he should be paid his rent fourfold.

The meeting of the board was a full one, but no one seemed inclined to put down any money. Even the promoter and future solicitor, Mr. May, "could not see" his way clearly to drawing a cheque, on the chance of being repaid if the shares of the company were allotted. He said he was quite certain that the scheme would take with the public, and he tried to persuade the directors collectively to give some advertising agent a guarantee that the expenses of advertising would be repaid, but they—one and all—did not seem to see it in the light in which this gentleman saw it. "If he was so certain that the scheme would pay, why did he not advance the money himself? Or, if he were short of funds, he might give the advertising agent the guarantee required." The meeting broke up without coming to any determination whatever, and I felt that my future secretaryship was by no means secure.

But Mr. May was not a man to be daunted by trifles. In the course of twenty-four hours he had overcome the difficulty. By means known only to himself, he procured somewhere in the City, an advertising agent, with whom he made the following bargain. This agent was to take upon himself the whole risk of advertising The Grand Financial and Credit Bank, and was to expend such sums as the promoter directed for that purpose, up to eight hundred pounds. For this, if the company did not proceed to allotment, he was to receive nothing; but if it succeeded—if the applications for shares were sufficient to warrant an allotment taking place—he was to be the first person paid out of the deposits, and for every hundred pounds risked he was to receive three hundred. The bargain, in short, was a speculation, in which the advertising agent might lose all the money he had laid out, or might, in less than a month, make a profit of three hundred per cent. All parties appeared well pleased with the bargain. The directors were so, because whatever happened they would not lose anything. Mr. May was pleased for the same reason. The advertising agent was glad to risk the money on the chance of being repaid threefold.

Accordingly, our prospectus appeared one morning at full length in all the papers, as did also a notice in the money article of the leading journals, telling the public that "A new scheme, called the Grand Financial and Credit Bank of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia, had been brought out with a nominal capital of one million," and that "the direction was highly respectable."

Were the applications for shares numerous? At first they were not, but a day or two after our prospectus was launched, friends of Mr. May's were sent upon the Stock Exchange to "rig the market." Thus, some gentleman not worth a ten-pound note in the world, would obtain an introduction to a respectable stockbroker, and would tell him (in confidence, of course) that he wanted to *sell* a hundred shares in the "Grand Financial," but would not do so at less than two, or two and a half, premium, because he was sure of having a certain number allotted him, and he knew well that the number applied for already, exceeded the number to be allotted in the proportion of three to one. In the mean time, another friend would go to another stockbroker, and say that he wanted to *buy* so many shares of the new bank, and would go as high as two, or two and a half, premium for them. Thus bargains—mere shams, of course—were made at this price, were quoted in the "money articles" (though not in the authorised lists), the public read them, were anxious to make money, thought that even if they got but a few shares it would be money easily made, and so came forward with a rush to apply for shares. In ten days, all our ten thousand shares were applied for, and before another week was over that number was nearly doubled. The directors wisely struck while the iron was hot, and proceeded at once to allot the shares. Mr. May got a cheque for his five thousand pounds of promotion money; the different directors got their respective "pulls" out of the concern; the advertising agent made his three hundred per cent profit; and so the bank floated.

How the affair worked—how it went on very well at first, then got shaky, and, finally, came to most unmitigated grief—may form the subject of a future paper.

FOR LIFE OR DEATH.

"SEÑOR INGLESE, a young lady renders a visit to your grace," said fat Juan the waiter, throwing the door wide for the visitor's admission. I was sitting in the window of my little room on the third floor of the Fonda de l'Alameda, looking down upon the darkling promenade where the lighted cigar-tips were beginning to twinkle among the fountains and marble statues, and where the beaux and belles of Malaga, with fan and rustling mantilla, and jingling spurs, were passing and repassing in endless groups, full of mirth and gossip. As for myself, I was heartily tired. We had had

a long day's work in getting the cargo on board, and I was fairly worn out with the toil of encouraging the lazy stevedores and disputing with the harpies of the Spanish custom-house. But the good ship Tudor, of Bristol, to which I belonged, in the capacity of first mate, had to be freighted as speedily as possible for the homeward voyage, and, as Captain Meiklejohn was getting frail and old, most of the responsibility devolved upon myself. Nor did I grudge it, the rather that Price and Thompson, our owners, had as good as promised that when the Tudor next sailed away out of sight of the tower of St. Mary Redcliffe, Henry West should command her, vice Meiklejohn, retired on a pension. And then—

But as my thoughts were busy with the day-dreams which fancy had conjured up with reference to what I should be able to do with the increased salary and higher position of captain, day-dreams in which the sweet little face and soft brown eyes of Alice Croft were inextricably mixed up with visions of a snug English home at Clifton, with happy children at play in its garden, and a loving welcome back for the husband and father when he should return from sea, Juan the waiter flung the door open exactly as I have described. And Alice Croft herself, with her poor little pretty face very white and tear-stained, came hastily in, while in the passage without I caught a glimpse of the wrinkled ugliness of old Seraphina, the old crone who was the Crofts' only servant.

"Alice, darling! You here? What is the matter?" said I, springing from my chair; and in a moment the poor little lonely English girl was weeping on my shoulder. It was not for some moments that I could succeed in calming her agitation sufficiently to draw from her a coherent account of the misfortune that had occurred, though I easily guessed that no trifling cause would have induced a girl so modest and strictly brought up as my dear Alice to enter the crowded and bustling Spanish hotel for the purpose of visiting a bachelor inmate of the Fonda. But at first Alice could say no more, through her sobs, than the words, "My father, my dear father!" and these led me vaguely to conclude that some accident had happened to old Mr. Croft, though of what nature I could not guess.

Old Mr. Croft was one of the few English, excepting the invalids whom the warm winter climate had at that time begun to attract, resident in Malaga. He was a widower, and Alice was his only child, and about nineteen years of age. Her father had married late in life, and on this account, perhaps, and for the sake of the wife, to whom he had been tenderly attached, and who had died when Alice was still very young, he was unusually wrapped up in his daughter, of whom he was excessively proud and fond. He was, indeed, of rather a proud and reserved nature, and disposed at times to speak and think with bitterness of a world by which he considered himself to have been unjustly used. His past history I never thoroughly

knew, for he was not over communicative, but he had been very well educated, and I often fancied in his manners and appearance that he had once occupied a much higher social position than that which he filled when I knew him. As it was, he was poor, and lived by the exercise of his talents as an artist. I believe he had considerable merits as a painter, but from constitutional shyness, or some feeling of, perhaps, morbid sensitiveness, he did not carry his powers to the best market. He was an excellent draughtsman, and had a fertile fancy and a correct taste, and he got his living partly as a drawing-master, partly by executing designs for Perez Brothers, the richest manufacturers in Malaga.

The Tudor paid periodical visits to the port of Malaga, and during one of these I had accidentally formed the acquaintance of Mr. Croft, for whom I willingly undertook to execute some trifling commission in England. I suppose we were mutually pleased with each other, for I perceived at once that he was a very superior man, and that in spite of the cynical tone that he sometimes affected, he was really of a generous and kindly disposition, a little warped by the world's rough usage. On his part, he showed his regard for me by inviting me to his house, a compliment which he paid to but few of our wandering countrymen. I saw Alice, and soon learned to love her, and after a while I was overjoyed to find that her innocent heart was given to me. But old Mr. Croft, who had been accustomed to think of his daughter as a child, set his face against our marriage, and behaved, as I thought, very cruelly in the matter. It would have been a hard thing for him, I am sure, to part with Alice to any one, a not uncommon case of half-unconscious parental selfishness. But, to do him justice, I am sure he thought that he was merely showing a prudent forethought for his child's interests in forbidding her to marry. He not unreasonably objected that my profession was hazardous, and my income small, and that though youth was apt to be sanguine, experience must be cautious. There was no hurry. Alice was very young, and I was young too, for that matter. Probably we should both of us see cause to change our minds, but if not, some years hence, &c. &c.

Though I chafed against the sentence, and Alice grieved at her father's decision, the was a good, obedient girl, and submitted to her parent's will. She would never marry any one else, she said, but she would not marry me in spite of her father's prohibition, never, never, though her heart should break for the loss of me. And with this qualified engagement and troth-plight I was forced to be content, though I looked eagerly forward to promotion, hoping that as captain of the Tudor I might appear to the old artist as a more eligible son-in-law. And now here was Alice suddenly appearing in my room at the hotel, and sobbing piteously as she tried to tell me what had happened.

At last I learned the truth: Mr. Croft had the

habit of taking a morning walk outside the landward gate of the city, and in the direction of the mountains. He was an early riser, and had an artist's fondness for the face of nature when the earth seems to awaken, fresh and young, at the first kiss of the sunshine. He was used, then, to stroll out beyond the walls as soon as the gates were opened for the ingress of the peasants coming to the market, and many of his best sketches were made in these rambles. In one of these strolls, that very morning, Mr. Croft had by ill luck stumbled into an ambush of the banditti, from whom the wild sierras neighbouring on Malaga are seldom free. These robbers, under a noted chief named Moreno, had of late been very audacious and troublesome, and it was conjectured that a party of the gang, lying in wait for the chance of kidnapping some wealthy townsman or landed proprietor, had pounced on Mr. Croft for lack of loftier game.

It is probable that the bandits may at first have been deceived as to the value of their captive. An Englishman is always considered a wealthy man in virtue of his nationality, and, besides, the sight of broadcloth produces on Spaniards nearly the same talismanic effect that the Neapolitan lazzaroni experience when confronted by a "vestito di panno," whose rank is inferred from the material of his coat. But at any rate they had made a hasty retreat to their fastness in the hills, bearing their captive with them. And when Alice, after waiting for her father's return, first in surprise, then in uneasiness, and lastly in alarm, went out to seek him, and came home baffled and tired, deep in the afternoon—old Seraphina gave her a letter, hastily pencilled on a scrap of folded paper, which an unknown peasant woman had left at the house.

The letter was from Mr. Croft. It ran thus:

"My dearest, dear Alice.—To give you pain is worse than pain to me, but the truth must be told. I am a prisoner in the hands of Moreno, at a place high up in the sierra. I write this at a halting-place, and I am told we shall instantly resume our journey, whither I do not know. I am in the hands of desperate men, who sell blood, or shed it, for money. They demand a ransom from me. As I have succeeded in convincing them that I am poor, they have fixed my price at five thousand reals. But unless this money is paid by noon on Wednesday, the chief assures me that—but why torture you, my child, by repeating a barbarian's threats?—at any rate, you will no longer have a father. I must die, Alice, dear, for well I know that to raise even that small sum is impossible. And we have no friends in Malaga. Perez Brothers might perhaps be induced to—but no. My employers would refuse. It is possible, however, that the British consul might take up the case. At any rate, Alice, love, I am sure he will assist you in getting home to England, and it is my earnest wish that you should leave Spain as soon as you can, and seek out those relatives of your mother

whose names you have heard me mention, and who will not deny you shelter and protection in your great need. The robbers whose prisoner I am bid me say that on Wednesday, at noon, some of the gang will await the payment of my ransom at the oratory near the village of Santa Maria del Gloria, at the foot of the mountains that border the road to Antequera and Madrid. There the money can be paid in the presence of the village padre, who is known to the band, and Moreno has sworn on the crucifix to give me up unharmed, and not to molest the messenger. But I have little hope, though I know you will try to obtain the money, dearest child. Farewell, dear Alice, God bless you, and Harry West too. I feel I was harsh with respect to—but you have my consent now. Bless——”

Here the paper had been torn, probably by the rough hands of the messenger to whom it was entrusted, and some lines of writing were lost. However, the signature, “Philip Croft,” still remained legible, and beside it was a rude representation of a cross, traced apparently with the point of a charred stick, while below it was written the word “Moreno,” in Mr. Croft’s handwriting. No doubt the robber captain had chosen to add his countersign to the document, the language of which he was unable to interpret.

“How shall we save him!” were the words that broke from the lips of both. I had to learn, however, that Alice had not sought me in the first instance. As soon as she received the pencilled lines, and had rallied from the effects of the first stunning shock, she had been nerved to exertion by the thought of her dear father’s danger, and she had gone from place to place, accompanied by old Seraphina. But in vain. The most obvious course to pursue, since there were but a very few dollars in Alice’s slender purse, was to sell the modest furniture of the little household, but a short interview with a broker proved the uselessness of this step. Those humble Lares and Penates would not bring a fourth of the necessary sum, and the landlord, too, had claims for the rent of the current half year. The artist’s forebodings with respect to the liberality of Perez Brothers were fully realised. Alice begged and prayed, but the firm refused, blandly but pitilessly, to make any advance, much less one of five thousand reals. Mr. Croft, they said, was a very good draughtsman, but business was business, and there was no obligation on either side. They very politely bowed the weeping girl out of their counting-house. At the British Consulate, Alice met with no better success. By ill luck the consul was absent. He would return in three or four days, but for the moment there was no help to be looked for in that quarter. Alice had a few cherished ornaments that had belonged to her mother. These she had sold, but, alas! they had produced but eight or nine hundred reals. And though old Seraphina, who took all the saints to witness that her master was a good man, and her young mistress an angel, heretics

or not, came with tears running down her wrinkled face, and offered her contribution in the shape of the gold cross she wore on holidays, and some twenty pillar-dollars saved out of her wages, nearly four thousand reals remained to be provided for within a brief delay.

What was to be done? I had not ten pounds in my possession, and neither I nor the Crofts had any credit with the bankers or merchants of Malaga. Captain Meiklejohn, as I knew, had but cash enough in his cabin locker to pay his harbour dues and the ship’s provisions, and even if the cautious old Aberdonian would have lent me the sum required, as I believe he would, it was out of his power, since his wife, as I knew, drew his salary while he was away at sea. Only one hope I had, and that was that the merchants to whom our cargo was consigned might lend me the money on my note of hand, backed by the captain’s recommendation. Alice, the good old Spanish woman, and I, lost no time, late as it was, in hurrying to the residence of the gentlemen of whom I have spoken. They were a well-known firm, Edwards and Son, and had had many dealings with my employers at Bristol.

“Mr. Edwards is absent, señor; he went yesterday by the steamer to Barcelona,” said the servant who opened the door.

“Mr. James Edwards?” asked I, as my heart sank.

The man arched his eyebrows. He wondered, he said, that I was not aware that Mr. James had been away from Malaga this week past. He was amusing himself, shooting and coursing, at a friend’s country-house somewhere near Xeres de la Frontera. He was expected back for the grand bull-fight to-morrow. Mr. James had too much good taste to miss such a spectacle as that, Pedro was sure.

I turned away, feeling the bitterness of hope deferred. Still, there was hope. Mr. James Edwards was a very good-natured young man, not so often to be found in the counting-house as his steady and punctual father, but he had always been civil to me in our business transactions. If he should really be back in time for the bull-fight, which I now remembered was to take place on the following day, he might be persuaded to lend the needful sum. At any rate, no more could be done on that night. It was getting late. The lamps fixed beneath the effigies of saints, and the few street lights, were already shining yellow through the darkness, and from tertulia gardens and the windows of wine-shops came the tinkling sound of guitars and castanets, with that of voices singing or brawling, and the clink of glasses and stamping of feet. It was time for Alice to go home and take some rest—rest that would be needed to recruit her strength for the toil of to-morrow. I walked beside her through the dark streets, but we did not converse much. Each of us was discouraged and full of sad forebodings, and when I had said “Good night” with forced cheerfulness, and gone upon my way, the recollection of Alice Croft’s pale face and wistful

look haunted me. I did not at once return to my hotel, but paced the Alameda for hours, racking my brains to no purpose. And at length, when the last lounge had dropped away from the deserted promenade, and there was nothing to be heard but the rustling of the night wind through the leaves and the melancholy splashing of the fountains, I, too, went home, and, thanks to the habit of a sailor's life, slept soundly enough.

On the next morning I was early abroad. While the women were gathering with their pitchers around the fountains at the corner of the streets, and the drowsy waiters, half asleep as yet, were letting down the gaudy awnings in front of the cafés, I sallied forth from the Hôtel de l'Alameda, unable to remain inactive, but with no clearly defined purpose. It was in vain that I tried hard to be hopeful and sanguine, and that I repeated to myself, for the twentieth time, that all would come right, on the return of Mr. James Edwards. But the young merchant might not return; he might refuse my request; any of the many petty accidents that daily occur might prevent him from granting me the favour I sought. And that a life was at stake I could not doubt. This was Tuesday. To-morrow the ransom must be forthcoming, or Alice would be left an orphan. It was in vain that I endeavoured to persuade myself that the robber captain was merely practising on the fears of his prisoner, the better to extort money. I knew but too well that Moreno was a man of his word in such matters. Ugly stories, half forgotten, which I had heard in the city or on the quays, recurred vividly to my memory now, and in many of these Moreno's name figured. Nothing was to be hoped from the bandit's clemency.

To seek the assistance of the authorities might have seemed a natural step. But this was not to be thought of. If I complained to the corregidor, it was probable that that dreaded functionary would see in the rendezvous at the village oratory an opportunity of attempting the capture of the obnoxious Moreno, and would think more of entrapping the outlaws than of saving the life of an obscure English heretic. And any affray between the police and the robbers would only ensure the butchery of the helpless captive, while it was notoriously impossible to hunt down offenders in such a difficult district as that of the mountains above Malaga.

Meanwhile the preparations for the great bull-fight went gaily on, and as I passed the amphitheatre I heard the hammers of the workmen engaged in putting up the striped canopies that were to shelter the more aristocratic spectators from the rays of the hot sun. The savage spectacle of the day was to be an unusually grand one for Malaga, by no means the Spanish city where this favourite Spanish sport is exhibited on the largest scale. But on this occasion the Captain-General of Andalusia, with some foreign guests of high rank, were to honour the show with their company, and the town had gone to considerable expense in providing for their entertainment.

As early as I decently could, I called at the merchant's house, but Mr. James Edwards had, of course, not yet arrived. I had not expected him to be there so early, but my impatience would not let me rest, and I paced the town like a perturbed spirit, eyeing with indifference the motley groups of people in holiday attire who were already astir and chatting merrily over the anticipated amusements of the festival. Duty made no call on my time, for, for that day, the work of freighting the ship was suspended. Our porters and dock labourers would not have been tempted to miss the bull-fight, even by quadruple wages.

At ten o'clock I went to the Crofts' house, and saw Alice. Poor girl, the dark circles around her pretty brown eyes, dimmed by weeping, showed that her sorrows had made the night a wakeful one for her. She was feverish and agitated, at one time seeming to partake the hopes that I expressed in the kindness of Mr. Edwards, at another, wretched and cast down, dreading the worst. In case of failure, her poor little plan was formed. She would go up, with such a small sum as she could get together, perhaps one thousand reals, to the chapel at the foot of the hills, and would try with prayers and tears to soften the ruffians who held her father prisoner. She would beg them to let him live, to restore him to her, and would promise by degrees to pay the remainder of the ransom, if she went into service to earn the money. And she really in her innocent ignorance appeared to believe in her own power to melt so hard a heart as that of Moreno, who was said to have the blood of sixteen victims on his own hand, and who was at war with the law.

I did not openly oppose this scheme, conscious that it would be well that Alice should have something on which her mind could dwell, as a relief from torturing thoughts. But I determined that she should not incur so fruitless a risk by going thus—a lamb among wolves—if I had to detain her by force. My own heart was very heavy when I left the dear girl, making her promise to stay quietly at home and await my return, and sallied out once more into the streets of the town, now alive with merry crowds hurrying to secure good places at the show. I began to perceive how slight was the foundation on which my hopes rested, and to fear, too, that the death of her father would darken my darling's happy young life, and that she would lose the sunny freshness of her youthful mind in the pain of that sharp and bitter trial. And the unthinking mirth of the careless pleasure-seekers chafed and galled me, as the sight of merriment is apt to do in the hour of suffering.

Noon at last. I went again to the house of Mr. Edwards. Good news, as I thought, awaited me. The young merchant, with two of his friends, had arrived, and, after partaking of breakfast, had repaired to the amphitheatre, "like all the world," as the old hag of a portress, left in charge of the house while all the other servants were gone to the show, rather

grudgingly remarked. To the bull-ring I therefore hastened at once, and having purchased a ticket which was to admit me to any part of the amphitheatre, elbowed my way through the swarming crowd, and entered. I had no eyes for the mass of gay-coloured apparel or the rows of eager excited faces, tier above tier, and still less for what was going on in the ring, where a young bull was being goaded to fury by sharp tridents and fluttering flags, a mere prologue to the more thrilling scenes that were to follow. But the crowd baffled me. Such multitudes from the neighbouring towns and villages, attracted by the spectacle, had poured into Malaga, that it was only for the ladies, and a favoured few of the magistracy and nobles, that seats could be retained. The rest stood so thickly massed together that I soon found that to trace out Mr. Edwards was hopeless. Giving up the effort in despair, I turned to depart, but through some mistake, instead of gaining the open air, I struck into a long passage leading I knew not whither, though I heard the bellowing of the bulls from the dens where they were shut up. Suddenly, from a sort of crypt, the half-open door of which was on my right, came the sound of voices, and I caught these words in Spanish: "If you offer a large reward? Say four thousand reals! Consider, gentlemen, four thousand reals for an hour's work!"

My feet seemed rooted to the ground, and I felt my face flush while I listened, as if life depended on my overhearing what followed.

"We shall not find a man, bid what we may," said another voice, despondently; "no one not tired of his life would run the risk, and, Caramba! what will the people say? There will be a riot, and our houses may pay for it. Only think what will be the fury of the thousands up yonder when they hear that Manuel Zagal cannot perform at all, and that we have no matador to take his place."

"If the idiot had but had the sense to break his leg after the bull-fight instead of before!" said a third speaker, in a whining and querulous tone. "But, señores, what is to be done? I would sooner pay four, ay, or six thousand reals out of my own pocket, than be the one to tell the people that they are to be disappointed of the cream of the sport. They may sack our houses in revenge, and mischief will surely be done. What can we do? Not a matador worth a straw within leagues, and Choco only fit to face the young bulls, and those with the wood on their horns. We shall have to use the demilune, and before the captain-general, what a disgrace!"

I began now to understand more clearly the purport of this discourse. I knew that a celebrated matador named Manuel Zagal had been engaged to come over from Seville, the headquarters of bull-fighting, to exhibit his skill in despatching the infuriated animals that had been previously provoked to fury by their mounted tormentors the picadors. This man, who was famous for skill and courage, stood so high in his profession that it had not been thought

needful to hire any other artist in the same line, and as matadors, like opera singers, travel from place to place as their engagements serve, there was no member of the guild then in Malaga. There was, indeed, an active toreador whose nickname of Choco was well known, but this man, though a favourite with the mob, was more a buffoon than a swordsman, and had neither the dexterity nor the daring which a true matador should possess. When a matador is wounded, or some untoward accident prevents the appearance of one, there is no resource but to end the lives of the bulls by cutting off their legs or ham-stringing them by means of a sharp scythe on the end of a pole, called a demilune. But this barbarous expedient seldom fails to irritate the populace, who are displeased, not at the cruelty of the act, but at the absence of that risk of human life that is essential to the excitements of the bull-ring.

In this case, I could easily divine what had happened. The talented performer from Seville, Señor Manuel Zagal, had met with a serious accident, and the authorities were afraid to announce to the people what had happened, aware that a violent outbreak of popular wrath would ensue. As for the speakers, by moving forward a step I could see them. Two were in civil uniform, the alcalde of the city, and a heavy beetle-browed man, the corregidor of the police. The third was a supple, deferential personage in black, well dressed in the French style. He was the manager of the shows.

"His excellency has arrived. I hear the trumpets!" said the head of the police, gruffly; "we must go and meet him, or we shall be thought lacking in respect. Pity there is no time to find a substitute; but who, even for four thousand reals, would face our two best bulls—the black Portuguese and the brindled Murcian, fiercer than——"

"Make the reward five thousand reals, and I am your man, noble señores," said I, with sudden resolution, emerging from my hiding-place. Had I risen, like a theatrical spectre, through a trap-door, my appearance could not have created greater consternation. The corregidor was the first to recover his equanimity. He knitted his heavy brows into a dark frown, and angrily demanded who I might be.

"Henry West, British subject, mate of the ship Tudor, now in port," was my answer; "ready to be your matador to-day, if you will raise the pay to five thousand reals."

An animated discussion then took place. The idea of a sailor, an Englishman, undertaking the difficult and perilous task of bull killing—for the matador, as is well known, is the only person exposed to real danger—seemed absurd. But then, it was shrewdly observed by Don Ramon, the alcalde, if I chose to get gored to death it was no concern of theirs, and the catastrophe would at least put the people in good humour. But the worthy magistrate was reluctant to give so much as five thousand reals. If I would accept three thousand, or even four?

But I was firm. Five thousand or nothing

were my terms, and as the mob began to get very noisy and impatient, the bargain was struck. An agreement was hastily written and signed by the alcalde, and a cheque for the money was drawn and entrusted to the master of the shows, to be handed to me when I should have earned it. As I traced my signature on the paper I felt that I was bartering my own life and blood to save Alice's father. That five thousand reals would be his ransom. But I had little time to meditate, for I was hurried off to another room, and there bidden to assume, as quickly as possible, the gay costume of a matador, and in the mean time the magistrates hastened to their places, and the master of the shows went on the somewhat awkward errand of explaining to the multitude that Manuel Zagal had broken his leg, and that a tyro would take his duties on himself.

From the dark little chamber in which I was occupied, clumsily enough, in exchanging my own clothes for the gaudy Andalusian suit which was a necessary adjunct of the character I had assumed, I could now and then catch the sound of the manager's voice, as in oily accents he addressed the enlightened audience of his patrons. At first his speech elicited much noisy disapprobation, but presently laughter and cheers drowned the oration, and when he came back he wiped his forehead with an air of self-congratulation. The audience had been restored to good humour. They had been testy and irritable, the manager told me, as he lent me his practised aid in dressing, until he reminded them that, at the worst, they had never seen an Englishman killed, and might look out for a novel excitement. "I told them, St. Martin forgive me, that you were the first toreador in all London, and had come to Spain to challenge our best bull-fighters to a contest of skill," continued the man, and then bade me look at myself in the glass. I did so, but hardly recognised myself, so much was my appearance altered by the embroidered jacket, the slashed calzoncillos, the many-coloured silken sash, the scarf heavy with silken fringe, and all the lace, bell-buttons, and frippery of my costume. The master of the shows eyed me critically, from the broad-leaved sombrero with its red plume and golden cord, down to the pumps and silk stockings which are as essential to a matador as to a master of the ceremonies, and clapped me on the shoulder with a good-natured word or two of approval. Then he presented me with the scarlet cloak and the long straight-bladed sword, and rapidly explained to me what strokes were considered "foul," and what were in accordance with the etiquette of this gory pastime. He was by no means ill natured, and did his best to encourage me, offering me wine and refreshments, and insisting that I should swallow at least one goblet of strong Calceavella.

"Cheer up, comrade," said he; "keep cool, avoid the first rush, and you may get off with unbroken bones and a whole skin. Throw the cloak well over his horns, and drive in the sword thus, turning the wrist in this manner, and

avoiding the breastbone. Never be in a hurry, or you are lost. I have seen old hands lose their heads at the first roar and dash of a hurt bull, but I like you, lad, schismatic as you are, and I don't want to see you go out feet foremost. Let me feel your pulse." And he took my wrist between his fingers, probably to ascertain if I were too much flurried by the approach of danger to attend to his instructions. However, he released my hand, muttering with something of genuine admiration in his tone, "Those island mastiffs! a tough breed!"

He then conducted me to a nook whence I could see through a small window which commanded a good view of the arena and of the spectators above, while the close trellis-work of rusty iron prevented the occupant of the lair from being visible. And then, bidding me be of good courage, he left me to attend to his duties. I was alone, though I could hear the hoarse bellowing of the bulls confined in dens near me; and now for the first time I had leisure to realise the rashness of my undertaking. I had followed the bidding of impulse in what I had done, and now, as I looked around, and remembered that the thousands of spectators would gloat over my dying agonies as greedily as over those of the brute victims of their cruel sport, I realised the full danger of my position. But I quieted my apprehensions by the thought of Alice. It was for her dear sake, to earn her father's ransom, that I was crouching where I was, in this mummer's garb, waiting till I should be called forth, like a gladiator of the old pagan days, to redder the sand of the bull-ring with my blood. For of escape from serious injury I had little hope. I knew that very few even of the agile Spaniards, accustomed from childhood to every detail of these repulsive spectacles, were willing to accept the perils of the matador's trade. I had seen bull-fights before, at Seville, at Vigo, and elsewhere, and remembered well how formidable were the huge animals bred in the lonely pastures of Murcia and Castile, expressly for the arena. But I drove away these thoughts, and took a deliberate survey of the amphitheatre.

I looked up at the endless tiers of spectators, the ladies, with their flashing eyes and waving fans, some in the old Spanish dress, but most in Parisian finery; at the dandies of Malaga; the crowds of shopkeepers and artisans; whole families together, from the delighted old grandmother to the child in arms, that was being taught to clap its little hands and crow at the sight of bloodshed; at the multitude of peasants in holiday attire such as their ancestors were in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella. I gave a glance to the place where the captain-general, in his rich uniform blazing with decorations, sat amid a brilliant group of officers and ladies, whose diamonds and courtly splendour seemed oddly placed in such a scene. And then I looked down at the ring.

As yet the sports had been merely of an introductory character. Three or four young bulls had been worried with tridents and flags. A

"craven," as those pacific animals are called whose temper is known to be meek, had been tormented with squibs, barbed darts, and the incessant brandishing of red scarfs before his eyes, and had finally been despatched by Choco, who did what may be called the comic business of the theatre. And now a fine bull, with wide-spreading horns, was in possession of the ring. This animal, however, disappointed the amateurs of the arena by showing more desire to escape than ferocity. He ran round and round, seeking an outlet, and bellowing piteously, as the active toreadors on foot, with banners and scarfs, ran nimbly around him, taunting and teasing him, until his hide was like a pincushion stuck full of tiny barbed darts adorned with coloured paper. Of this, too, the people grew weary, and a general shout arose:

"Toros! toros! the Murcian bull at once! No, the Portuguese! Let the English matador show us what stuff he is made of. Toros!"

The manager looked up appealingly to the captain-general, and, receiving an august nod of permission, bustled out. Very soon there was a flourish of trumpets, and then a deep roar, and then, amid clapping of hands and huzzaing of countless voices, the brindled Murcian bull came at a heavy canter into the ring, stopped short, lifted his head, and gave a second roar of impatient anger. A noble beast he was, and the populace enthusiastically shouted forth their comments on his tossing mane, his deep chest, his dauntless look, the strength of his limbs, and the sharpness of his horns. Then, to the sound of martial music, in poured the mounted picadors, two and two, fluttering with bright ribands, and dressed in the old Castilian garb. They lowered their lances before the captain-general, and rode three times round the arena to exhibit their bright scarfs and rich jackets, while the cymbals clashed and the drums rolled out their loudest notes. The bull pawed the ground, distended his nostrils, and, with a short bellowing cry, stooped his head and began the attack. The words "Bravo, toro!" rent the very sky.

It was a butcherly business at best, though I admit that the rich dresses, the long lances, and waving of scarf, and riband, and plume, gave a false glitter and gallantry to what was really a very dastardly and disgusting scene. The picadors, padded as they were, and furnished with immense boots through which the bull's horns could not pierce, while scores of watchful attendants stood ready to distract the animal's attention in case of need, or to carry off a prostrate combatant, were safe enough. But the bull, itself bleeding from the repeated lance-thrusts, did great execution among the horses, plunging his sharp horns into their quivering flanks again and again, and inflicting ghastly wounds, while still the wretched steeds went reeling round the ring, until loss of blood made them drop down dying on the ensanguined sand. And still the music played its most stirring strains, and still the people shouted, while the ladies waved fans and handkerchiefs in token of

applause, and all the gory savagery of the Spanish national sport went on with sickening repetition. At last, nine horses being dead or frightfully injured, two picadors having been bruised by falling against the oaken barriers, and the bull being much spent, the remaining horsemen left the ring. Ropes and hooks were fixed to the carcasses of the slain horses, and they were dragged away, and fresh sand and sawdust were thrown down. It was time for the matador to appear.

"Now, Englishman, they are waiting for you. Remember the thrust, and be cool," whispered the manager. He led me into the ring, and I made my bow to the captain-general, and another to the audience, while the manager, with much grandiloquence, presented me to the public as "Don Enriquez, of London, the distinguished volunteer, who had so kindly undertaken to fill the office of the eminent Manuel Zagal." Scarcely had he finished this speech before the bull began to advance, and my introducer hastily retired. I stood alone in the ring, my heart beating thickly, and a red film seeming to obscure my dazzled eyes, while the clamour of the crowd, and the consciousness that I was the mark on which thousands were gazing in pitiless expectation, almost unnerved me. I had faced danger before, but not in such a shape, and I am not ashamed to own that for a moment my knees felt strangely weak, and my pulses fluttered like a bird over which the hawk hovers. Then came back the thought of Alice, and I was myself once more. Disregarding the spectators, I bent my whole attention on the bull, which was slowly approaching me, with its head bent down, and bloody foam dropping from its lips. I steadied myself on my feet, carrying the cloak gathered up on my left arm, and with my right I kept the sword pointed to the earth, ready to spring aside when my antagonist should charge. But the bull was more hurt than I had expected. His movements were slow and painful, and the blood trickled fast from his brindled flanks. His rolling eyes fixed upon me, then he gave a roar, and dashed at me, while, following the manager's instructions, I avoided him by springing aside. I thought the animal would have wheeled to renew the attack, but the last rush had manifestly exhausted his remaining strength. He fell on his knees, and did not rise till the men on foot beset him with squibs and darts, when pain and fury revived his forces, and he again made a floundering charge. This time I stepped aside, and, without throwing the cloak over the bull's horns, plunged the sword into his neck. He fell, and the audience set up a shout of "Well done, Ingles!"

"That was an easy victory," whispered my friend, the manager, as he led me off, after making my bow to the people; "but don't let it make you rash. The poor brute was bleeding to death; anybody could see that! It will be different with the black Portuguese."

And so it proved, for the audience loudly demanded that the lances of the picadors should

be tipped with wood, all save a point two inches long, so that the next bull should show better sport. And, not to dwell on details, after five or six horses had been disabled, the picadors retired, and amid a flourish of trumpets I was placed face to face with the black Portuguese bull.

"Bravo, toro! look what a wicked eye he has! I bet an ounce of gold on the bull!" shouted one amateur, springing to his feet, and there was a burst of laughter at the offer of this wager, but a breathless silence succeeded as I advanced, step by step, towards where the bull stood, pawing up the loose sand with his fore feet, and roaring low, as he watched me. He was a superb beast, very large, but a model of symmetry, and his sable coat, spotted now with froth and gore, was as glossy as satin. He was very little hurt; his bloodshot eyes rolled fiercely; he was evidently gathering breath to renew the battle. On my part, I was well aware that my life hung by a thread, but that if I could conquer this one bull, the last survivor, my work would be done, and the money—the price of a man's safety—would be earned. A hasty word of prayer rose from my heart to my lips, and I advanced, cautiously but firmly. The bull appeared to be in no hurry. He waited, with heaving flanks, close to one of the barriers, while I drew near.

"Have a care, Englishman, have a care! he means mischief!" cried some well-meaning spectator in the front row. Scarcely were the words uttered, before with a deep and sudden roar the black bull came thundering down upon me in headlong charge. It was all that I could do to spring aside, and the bull, unable to check himself, dashed his head against the wooden barriers with a violence that made many women in the lower tier scream with affright. But with great quickness the huge beast recovered himself, and came rushing towards me, with his head low. Again I sprang aside, but so narrow was my escape that one of the sharp horns caught the sleeve of my gaudy jacket, and ripped it open from wrist to elbow, while the applause of the audience followed the stroke. Before I could use my sword, the bull nimbly wheeled, and I was forced to trust for my life to my superior speed of foot, running round the ring, hotly chased by the bull, whose feet sank in the loose sand. I then turned, and made an ineffectual effort to throw the red cloak over the eyes of my terrible antagonist, but the crafty beast eluded me, and this time, as I sprang out of its way, I felt a sharp pang in my left arm and side, and staggered back, almost dropping the sword. The people set up a cry:

"Toro! Viva El Negro! the black bull for ever! Well done, bull! I see the Englishman's blood."

A crimson mist floated before my eyes, I grew dizzy, and the roar of the audience confused me. Was all indeed lost? Half mechanically, while the blood ebbed from my wounded arm, I looked around me. The bull was close by. I saw his

glaring eyes and tossing horns; he lowered his head, and made a fresh charge. Hardly knowing what I did, I thrust forward the long strong-bladed sword of the matador, and planted my feet firmly, and then there was a crash and a bellowing roar, and I was beaten to the ground, and rose again, feebly, and then I was leaning on my sword, reeling like a drunken man, as the manager supported me and bade me bow to the audience, while the shout of "O, well done the Englishman! Viva! Viva! Well done!" rose from thousands of throats. Close beside me lay the carcase of the black Portuguese bull. My sword had reached its heart. The next thing I remember was that I lay, half swooning, on a mattress in one of the inner crypts of the amphitheatre, while a doctor was binding up my hurts.

"Considerable hæmorrhage, but no artery damaged, after all!" said the French surgeon; "let us see the other wound. Bah! a mere graze. You have escaped *bel et bien*, my young friend, after all!"

So it proved. I suffered no inconvenience beyond loss of blood from the injury I had received, and the money I had earned being forwarded by a safe hand to the place of rendezvous on the following day, Mr. Croft was set at liberty. Moreno proved a man of his word, being equally willing to release a captive whose ransom was paid, as to poniard an insolvent prisoner. I will not attempt to describe Alice's joy at being reunited to the father whom she had mourned as dead, nor the mingled terror and gratitude with which the darling girl learned the desperate means I had taken to save him. I am captain of the Tudor now, and she is my wife, and in our English home, in which we have lived happily together for so long, she has often recalled, with tears and smiles, that episode in our lives which was so nearly proving tragical at Malaga.

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